FEBRUARY 1989
ISSUE FIVE
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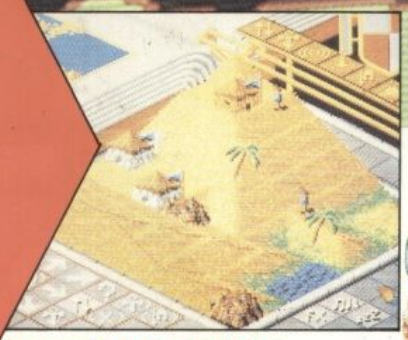
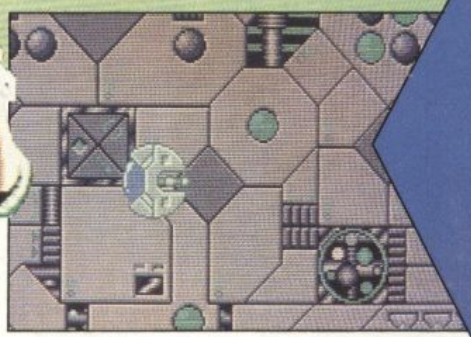
THE One

ATARI ST
AMIGA
PC

FOR 16-BIT GAMES

DRAGON'S LAIR CUTS LOOSE!





POPULOUS
A Gift From The Gods?

Players Guide
OPERATION WOLF

COSMIC PIRATE
Yo Ho Ho It's A Barrel Of Fun

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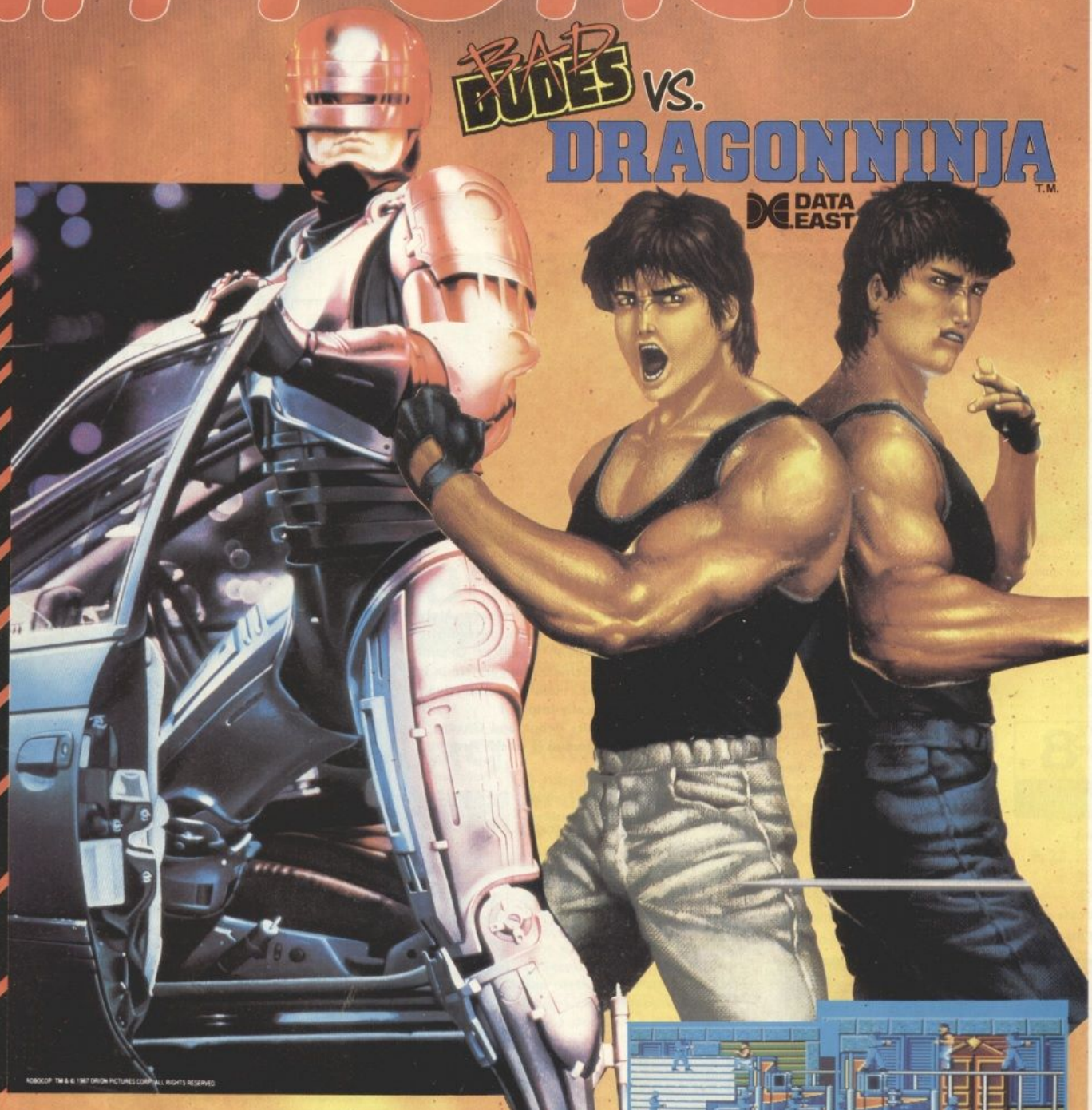

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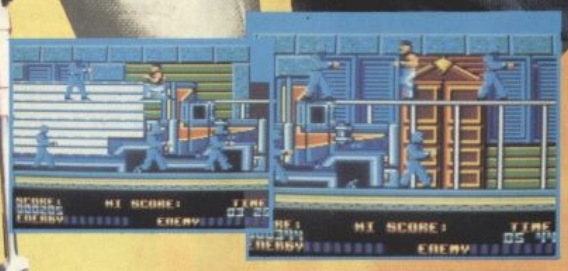

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BAD DUDES VS. DRAGONNINJA

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CONT

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With Special Thanks To: Nunkie Graeme for his ace antidote to our insomnia.

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Join June and Terry in another half-hour of hilarity. This week there are lots of saucy goings on when Terry loses his trousers and the vicar comes to tea.

A veritable feast of fun for all the family, including the long-awaited results of the Fish **competition. Tree-mendous.**

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Trouble at t'mill? A rumble in the jungle? We can't promise to solve your acne problem, but we have got advice for players pained by conversions of Thunderblade **and** Afterburner. **And there's more where that came from.**

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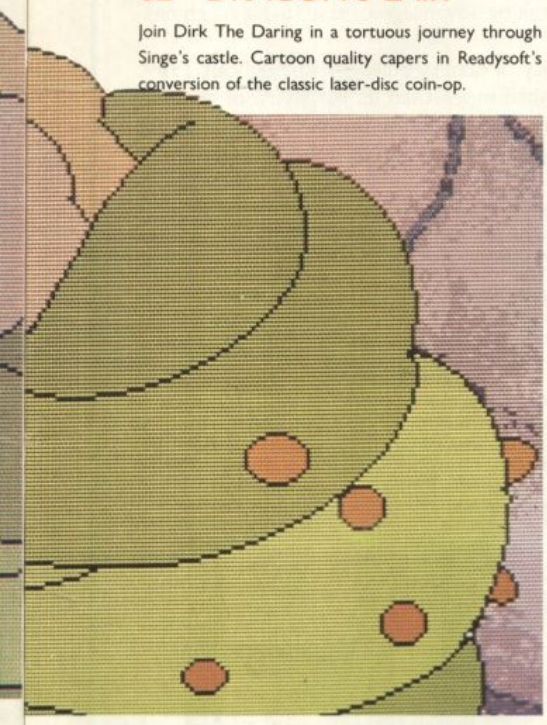

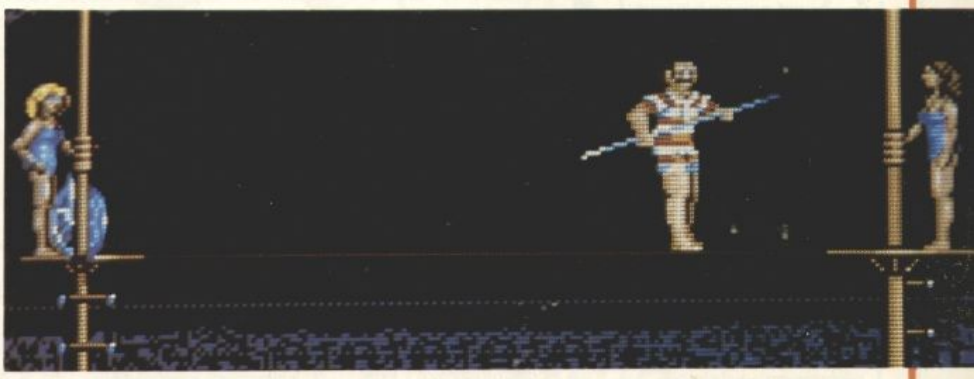

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Gary Whitta armours up to help the beleaguered commando through Ocean's Operation Wolf.

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EDITORIAL

FISHY FROLICS

At last! The of-fish-al results of the Sounds Fishy competition run in Issue Three. Rainbird provided the prizes, and you had to provide five fishy song titles to make our panel of judges roll around the floor in hysterics.

We had plenty of **Twist And Trouts** and **Shark The Herald Angel-fish Swims**, but there were a few unique gems that, even though they raised a smile, weren't really made of the stuff of winners. **It's That Old Fishy Called Cod Again, You Are Always in My Fish** by the Chip Shop Boys, **Scuba-pike-a-carp-a-lobster-crab-a-shrimp-a-tuna-expealidotious** (!), and even more bizarre: **Killer Whale Recites The Revenge Of The Carp-ulated Idealisms Of Brown Trout**. All scored highly on the Chortle-ometer.

But it was 10 winners we were after, and after much deliberation it was 10 winners that we got. The following bouys and gulls can expect to see a copy of Rainbird's **Fish!** wrapped in a tasteful Telecomsoft T-Shirt popping through their doors in the near future.

Mr A J Wills, of Holland-On-Sea in Essex got Scrivo the Ad Man a-giggling with, amongst others, **Buoys Buoys Buoys** by Sea-Breamer and **I Shop For Seafish** by Bob Marlin And The Whalers. Abba's **Knowing Minnowing You** clinched it for Jonathan Grandin of Sudbury in Suffolk, while Skate Bush's **Running Up That Eel (Make A D-eel With Cod)** did it for Ceiron Faux of Tunbridge Wells in Kent. A Hicks of Keynsham in Bristol tickled a few ribs with **Wishing Whale** by Terence Trout Guppy, and so did **There's A Guy Works Down The Fish-shop Swears He's Shellfish** by Kirsty Mackerel from P D Goffin of Bitterne Park in Southampton. Codonna's **Like A Sturgeon** and UB40's **Red Red Herring** Eddie McKendrick of Reading in Berkshire provided mirth and amusement aplenty, as did Oliver Trusler of Farnham in Surrey with **This Sole House** by S-hake-y. Christopher P Jones of Herne Bay in Kent came up with **I Should Be Sole Lucky** by Coley Minnow-gue, Andrew Moore of Wensley Road in Leeds got us giggling with **Gold-fish Finger** by Shirley Bass-ey, and M Griffiths of Poole in Dorset scraped in with **Mackerel Roe The Bloater Shore (Barracuuuuuda).**

WHAT A GOOD YEAR FOR THE ROSES

It should be a good year for the software, too – provided we don't get a glut of uninspired tie-ins and coin-op conversions. A few top notch ones wouldn't go amiss, but innovation should be the word at the top of every software house's New Year's Resolution List. At worst, how about 'borrowing' some of the more classic 8-bit concepts and taking advantage of the 16-bit machines' more advanced features, eh?

As ever, we shall endeavour to provide the greatest quantity of quality editorial throughout 1989. And as for exclusivity... who needs it? The One has certainly had more than its fair share of genuine and editorial deadline-biased exclusives, and will no doubt continue to do so. But what the heck. At the end of the day you can't beat quantity with quality. And that's what we aim to provide. Here's to a prosperous new year for all of us...

NEXT MONTH

Wow! Issue Six of The One will cost £2.50. But don't despair! The reason is to cover the enormous cost of cover-mounting a disk packed with playable previews of the hottest new releases for the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga 16-bit computers* Not forgetting gallons of news, reviews, previews, interviews and views. You don't need to choose or turn to booze. You just can't lose**

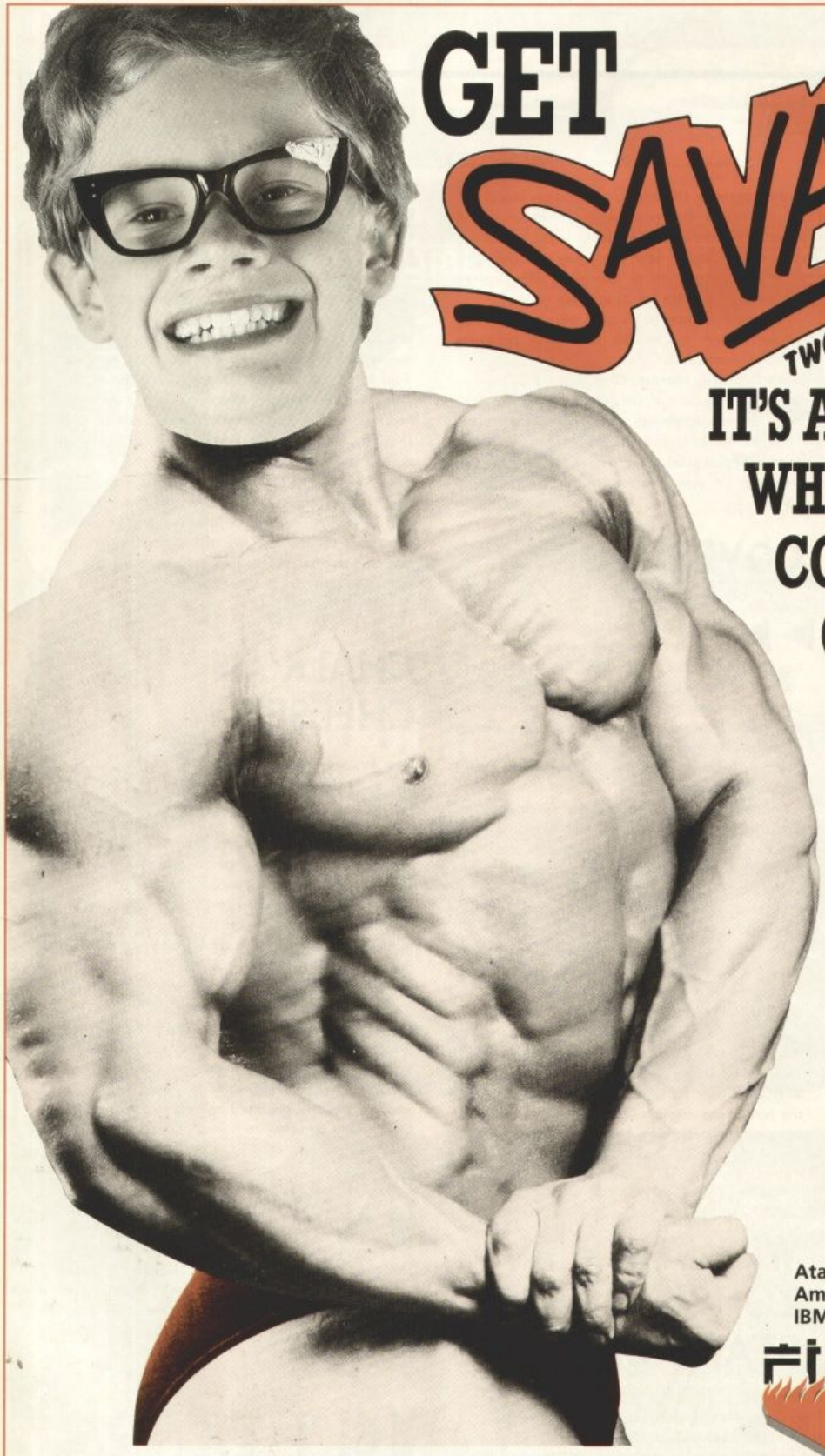
ON SALE FEBRUARY 28th

DON'T MISS IT***

*Typically Tossy Marketing Blurb.

**Typically Tossy Editorial Blurb.

***More Typically Tossy Marketing Blurb.



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Amiga screen shot.

IBM PC CGA screen shot.

IBM PC EGA screen shot.

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Amiga £19.99
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LETTERS

TROUBLE DOWN UNDER

G'day,

Firstly I would like to say thanks. Thanks for a great magazine and for supporting us 16-bit owners. After all, we are in a class of our own and should be treated as such. Having just gone through Issue Two of The One (in no less than three times in half an hour), I was amazed at how fulfilled I was after buying this mag. Forget the rest. This is The One and only for me.

Secondly, I would like to bring the following to the attention of all fellow ST and Amiga owners... namely conversions. Yes arcade conversions, if that's what you can really call them – mostly a poor compromise to extract money from us ever-hungry games players. Software houses have an incredible cheek. They ask full price for a conversion that derserves only one third of that.

Take a look at **Street Fighter**, **Space Harrier**, **Bomb Jack**, **OutRun** and **Alien Syndrome** to name but a few. These conversions fall far short of pushing our STs or Amigas to their limits. I'd be too embarrassed to publish a game of this quality (mostly lacking). Has greed taken over from pride? If this is the case then it's time us ST and Amiga owners made them think twice about shovelling out their poor conversions onto our doorsteps.

Paul Brauman, Lookshill, Australia

No doubt the programmers of such conversions would have something to say on the matter. But bear in mind, Paul that the cost of acquiring the licences represents a hefty slice of development costs.

A PICTURE OR A THOUSAND WORDS?

Dear The One,

Congratulations on creating such a fine mag which I can actually look forward to every month, and thanks for the great year planner. This was not the only reason I wrote in though, because sadly I have a small complaint. Please could you make your actual reviews a little longer. When I mean reviews, I mean five or six paragraphs relating to the game explaining the graphical movement, the plot, the sound, the playability, etc, etc – with three or four colourful screenshots and the rating and comments on each version.

To point out my complaint, in Issue Four is the **Purple Saturn Day** review which spread over three pages, consisting of 15 quite large pictures of the game and two small paragraphs of review. A good example in the same issue is **TV Sports Football**, which has 11 paragraphs of solid reviewing, but is still sadly spread over four pages with the generous help of the staggering 19 pictures – need I say more?

I do realise the concept of presentation and pointing out the quality of the graphics in showing screenshots, and I agree in every way with this – but when you plaster three or four pages with pictures, this leaves little space for an accurate review.

I'm sure that many 16-bit users who buy your mag will agree with me, as this is a 'game reviewing magazine' – correct?

Mark Purslow, Marple, Cheshire.

You can't please everyone all of the time, but surely any discerning reader would rather form their own impressions from a complete visual guide to a game rather than read the extraneous witterings of some opionated hack. Speaking of which...

COVER STORY

Dear Sir,

I like your magazine quite a lot, and particularly enjoy the reviews of the more sophisticated products like flight simulators. I hope you will continue to give extensive coverage of this kind of 'more mature' game. Certainly I feel sure that I am typical of your readers in finding the average 'arcade shoot 'em up' wearisome.

Hardly a challenge to the old brain cells! Even if mine are getting on a bit!

I hope however you will consider a little constructive criticism. Do you not think it would be more effective if your front covers didn't have this 'mish-mash' of images. Personally I think I would prefer one single image (perhaps sometimes of hardware rather than software) as being less confusing. You could take a leaf out of ST Update's book in this regard.

Nevertheless I look forward to buying your magazine every month. My wife says it keeps me 'out of trouble' for days!

Gerald Throughgood, Chelmsford, Essex.

What's wrong with 'arcade shoot 'em ups?' One of the main attractions of the 16-bit computers is that they are capable of pleasing all types of user. As for the cover images – well, like the rest of the magazine they are always subject to change and modification, but as for limiting ourselves to a single image... why?

WILL THE REAL ZOMBIE PLEASE STAND UP

Dear Sir,

Congratulations on another brilliant PD information section. It's very nice to see that 90 per cent of our 16-bit demos are far more interesting than the average 16-bit game.

With reference to the disk sent to yourselves by Mazier Davis, the exploding head is actually taken from probably the best horror film ever made: George A Romero's '**Zombies, Dawn Of The Dead**'. This scene is not actually present in the British video print, but it is either digitised from the American uncut print or another European copy.

Oh, by the way, **Day Of The Dead** is by no means a 'classic'. In fact it is definitely the weakest production in Romero's **Zombie** trilogy. Anyway, you can only have seen the British video or cinema print which was heavily edited. And for a Romero film with ace Tom Savini special effects? There is a fair bit of this make-up artist's amazing effects cut from it. As far as horror fans go, I'm sure they'll all agree with me that this is probably the only Romero Zombie flick that doesn't bite.

Roger Mitchem, Cheltenham, Gloucester.

Whoops! Our sincerest apologies to all Romero fans for our obviously inexpert comments. By the way, we're only human here so don't hesitate to continue to put us right if we dare to make any further rash statements.

CHALK AND CHEESE?

Dear Sir,

I like your magazine but am concerned that you treat a mere toy like the Atari ST and the mighty Amiga as if they were one and the same. The Amiga is a powerful machine capable of considerably more sophisticated graphics and sound than the ST – which is hardly more than a Spectrum. I speak from some experience, having successfully implemented a CAD system on my Amiga after much fruitless time spent wasted initially attempting to do this on an ST.

You are not alone in mixing together 'chalk and cheese'. Most of the other 'general' 16-bit mags do the same and the software producers seem to regard the Amiga as a mere 'ST with better sound'. I am sure that software that really utilised the enormous potential of the Amiga would find a ready market amongst similarly dispirited readers. Come on The One! Come on software houses! You wouldn't put out ZX81 games on the ST don't put ST games on the Amiga!

Clive Erickson, Aintree, Liverpool

Whatever the truth may be about one machine's advantages over the other, the fact remains that most 16-bit games remain remarkably similar across both formats. Therefore it makes sense to include both formats in a single magazine. Rest assured however, we'll let you know if and when the software houses eventually begin to exploit both machines' advantages.

LETTERS

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ISS

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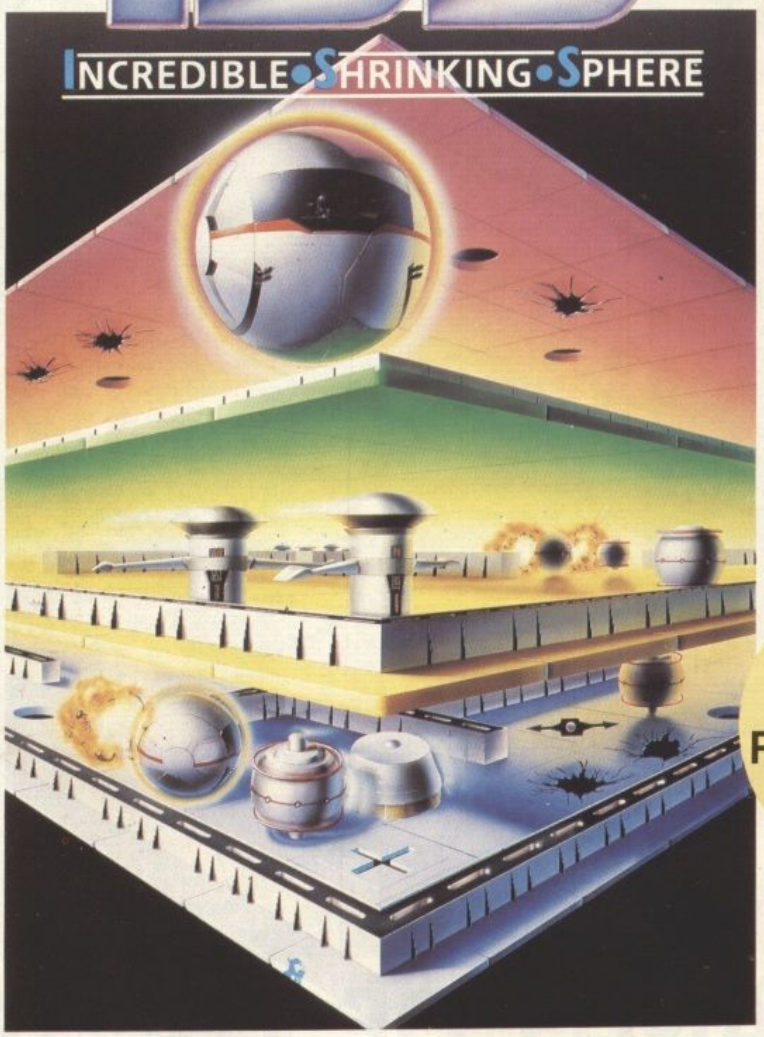

WIN A TOMY ROBOT! FREE
PLANISPHERE INSIDE PACK

Atari ST screens shown

The Sangfalmadore Run, a planetoid battle training arena, has been designed to push new recruits to the limits – trying their speed, strategy and reflex responses!

However, recent unexpected seismic activity has caused faults on the planet's surface and the collapse of tectonic tiles . . .

Colonel-in-Chief, Matt Ridley, frustrated by his desk-bound job, took to the controls of a fighter sphere to test his ability on the now unstable Sangfalmadore Run!

Take control of the Incredible Shrinking Sphere! Using your skill, judgement and razor sharp reactions, avoid collapsing tiles and assassin spheres.

Your task is to locate Colonel Ridley, but first you must survive the Sangfalmadore Run . . .

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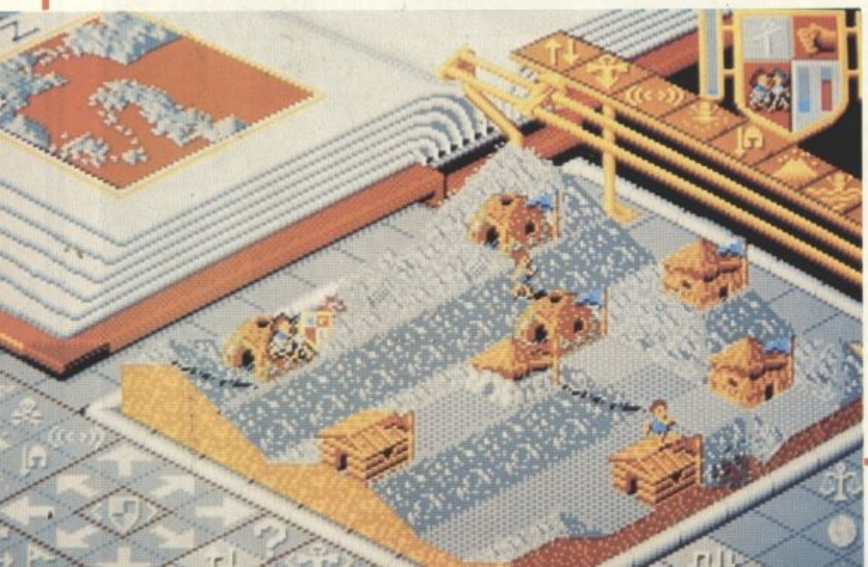
THE HANDS OF THE GODS



IT HAS been said that there are only six different types of joke. Similarly, it can probably be said that there are only seven different types of computer game – but Bullfrog Productions' Peter Molyneux reckons that his company has just invented the eighth.

Populous concerns the conflict of two deities in a complex blend of strategy, action and pure old fashioned luck. The idea is simply to become as powerful as possible, reducing faith in the other god in the process ... "Proof denies faith and without faith I am nothing."

As a god, you can do plenty of god-like things ... such as levelling mountains and laying waste to land, or more constructively, creating land. The more effective the implementation of your power, the more faith people have in you – and the more faith people have in you, the greater your power.

Strictly speaking, you

Play is controlled by mouse and icon, using the intricate symbols in the bottom left corner. The map in the top right shows the surrounding environment, while the top left display depicts the player's status.

don't directly control people's actions, but you can point them in the right direction by suitably affecting their environment.

Creating buildings allows the population to multiply – for as each building fills up, the excess population is cast out to discover their own living area. At one end of the construction scale there's the basic mud hut, at the other lie vast complexes of stone castles. However the larger the building, the longer it takes to fill, thus fast expansion requires the creation of a number of smaller dwellings – leaving your population vulnerable to attack from the other side.

And so it goes on. Gods create death-dealing knights and volcanoes as their power increases. Natural disasters also affect the proceedings, with war, plague and famine all playing a part in the shaping of your world.

Because of the game's unusual perspective, it's not possible for two players to compete using a single machine. Should a couple of people wish to take each other on, a pair of computers can be linked using a customised serial lead.

Bullfrog Productions has been working on **Populous** for over six months (prior to this, the company wrote **Fusion** – also for EA – and before that it converted **Druid: Enlightenment** to the Amiga for Firebird).

Peter Molyneux is the master programmer, while Glenn Corpus produced the graphics (Glenn also created the graphics for **Fusion**). Musician Dave Hanlon provided the eerie, atmospheric 'soundtrack' and suitable sampled sound effects (the fire sound was produced by crumpling an empty crisp packet, and a watery noise by making a disgusting noise with the mouth! – eurgh).

Around 40 per cent of the team's time was spent developing 'Artificial Intelligence' routines to generate a believable universe to play with – part of which was originally modelled in Lego to produce accurate dimensions and perspective.

Should the game achieve its well deserved acclaim, there's the possibility of a **Populous Plus** later this year – most likely in the form of an expansion pack featuring extra terrain and computer strategies. Bullfrog is also toying with the idea of a networked **Populous** where up to 16 players could compete against one another.

Bullfrog's objective is to produce four games annually – something straightforward like **Fusion**, along with three more innovative projects. Meanwhile, **Populous** is being fine-tuned for completion by the time you read this. An April release date and a price of £24.95 have been set for both Amiga and ST versions.

The environment's 10,000 individually named worlds are split into four different types; Volcanic Rock, Fresh Green Pastures, Sandy Deserts and Ice Worlds.

TOP TEN

(Month Ending January '89)

COMMODORE AMIGA

US Gold's Thunderblade**: new at number 4.**

1	NE	FALCON (Spectrum HoloByte/ Mirrorsoft)
2	RE	LOMBARD RAC RALLY (Mandarin)
3	NE	OPERATION WOLF (Ocean)
4	NE	THUNDERBLADE (US Gold)
5	NE	TV SPORTS FOOTBALL (Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft)
6	1	SPEEDBALL (Image Works)
7	RE	ELITE (Firebird)
8	3	BATTLE CHESS (Electronic Arts)
9	4	ROCKET RANGER (Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft)
10	NE	HOSTAGES (Infogrames)

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FIREBIRD FROLICS

Motormouth presenter Neil Buchanan gets his comeuppance in Rainbird's Weird Dreams, thanks to some technical trickery with Genlock.

DELAYS abound at British Telecom's software appendages Firebird and Rainbird, with release dates pushed back further and further. The bizarre **Weird Dreams** (see Issue Two) now won't see the light of shop until at least early March, but tune in to TVS' Motormouth on a Saturday morning and you may get so see said software featuring prominently in a simplistic quiz game.

The five minute slot is to run over eight weeks and will see viewers attempting to correctly answer 10 general knowledge questions in two and a half minutes. By getting the answers right, the contestant guides his or her character through a **Weird Dreams** dream scene, with something nasty happening as the result of an incorrect answer. Eventually two people will battle it out in a final, and the winner gets to fly to Egypt for a long weekend break.

Frontier, Realtime's **Elite** lookalike, has been temporarily suspended, while **Verminator,** the bizarre arcade adventure set in a tree, has been delayed until April. Presumably this has nothing to do with the fact that its author, Nigel Brownjohn, provided some graphics for the second of three sections in **Savage.** The first is shown here, while the second is a **Space Harrier**-esque affair and the third a multi-directional scrolling exploration with you in control of an eagle. Tim Moore is working on the Amiga incarnation which is nearing completion for a March release, while Brian O'Shaughnessey is bringing up the rear with the PC incarnations.

There's good news on the coin-op conversions front though, with Irem's cutesy shoot 'em up **Mr Heli** still on course for its intended May release, and the horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up **P47** is looking good for August.

Rainbow Islands, the equally innovative sequel to Taito's **Bubble Bobble,** looks set to meet its April release. The game is currently being converted to ST and Amiga by none other than Graftgold's 8-bit innovator Andrew Braybrook. The Witham wonder has been working on it since last November, and is rightly pleased with the full screen scrolling ST incarnation which is looking almost arcade perfect – mainly thanks to partner John Cummings' graphic work.

John was responsible for **Zynaps'** game design, in conjunction with Graftgolder Dominic Robinson – who is working on an arcade-style 3D game for Rainbird. Dominic's currently designing a world around his mix of solid, semi-transparent and vector graphics, and – along with another potentially stunning blaster – he's keeping gameplay close to the chest.

The first level of Amiga Savage sees a bronzen beef-cake battling through horrors.

'Spindizzy' Shirley's multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up (provisionally entitled **Wibble Wobble,** with graphics from once 8-bit binary Botticelli Bob Stevenson), Geoff **'The Sentinel'** Crammond's 3D driving game (tentatively titled **Stunt Car Racer**). **Blazing Barrels, Dragon** and **Deja Vu II** from American software developer Icom,

More horizontally scrolling hi-jinks in Firebird's Savage, this time on the PC (EGA).

Other interesting items due during this year are **Rick Dangerous** (little is known, apart from 'it's looking good' and a release date is yet to be set), Paul are also scheduled, as are **Broadsword, Lasers And Labyrinths, Starlord** and **Interstellar Overdrive** from Maelstrom.

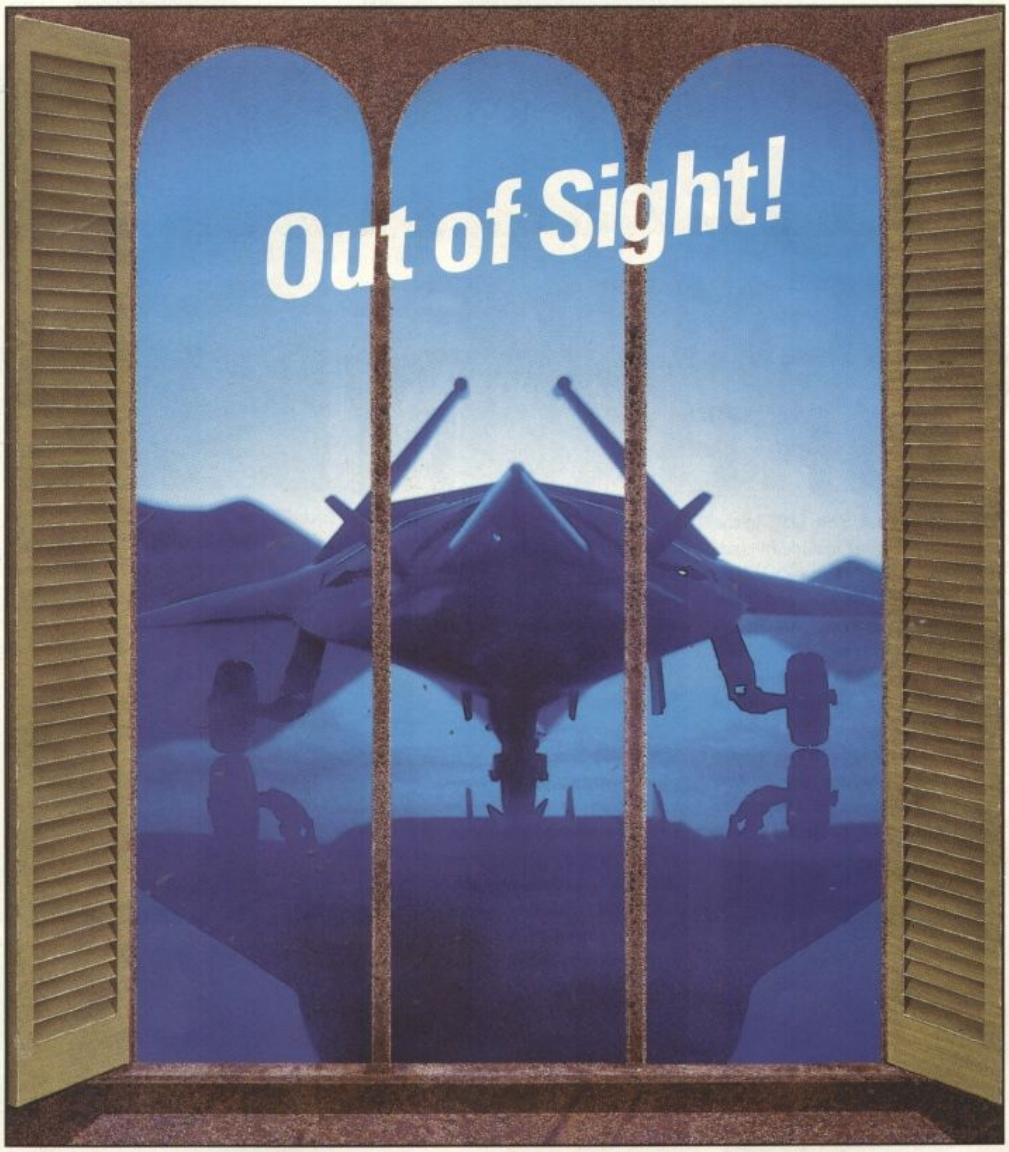
Watch out in future issues for the facts to back up this stunning array of names.

PALACE PRANKS

OUTLAWS' Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit won't be seeing the light of day until... ooh, around late February. The reason for the delay it seems is that while John Hare (one half of Sensible Software, the due behind the original 8-bit version) was producing demonstration games, he found a few bugs and made some recommendations, so a few were made. The good news is that the ST version isn't far behind its Amiga parent.

Unmentionable problems delayed the release of Palace's **Barbarian II** (reviewed in Issue Two), but now the ST version is complete and should be on the streets by the time you read this. And yes, there's a **Barbarian III** under development even as we speak.

Two other projects due to appear before the year's out are **Superthief** and **Monster Museum**. Sadly, further details are a little vague at the moment.



F-19

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THE TEMPLE OF BRUM

NOT CONTENT with simply snapping up the rights to the latest Lucas/Spielberg epic, **Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade,** US Gold has decided to release TWO separate interpretations of the game. One is to be developed by newly-signed American development house, Lucasfilm Games, which has built a formidable reputation on the 8-bit scene over the years, while the other will come from Tiertex, converter of **Thunderblade, Last Duel** and **Rolling Thunder.**

The film, starring Harrison Ford, Sean Connery and Alexei Sayle (!) will be premiered on these shores around Spring-time, with USG hoping to get both games out soon after.

Other big-screen licences due from USG in the coming year include Michael Jackson's fantasy flick, **Moonwalker,** and the classic horror movie **A Nightmare On Elm Street,** both scheduled for release in the latter half of '89.

Scheduled for release shortly before the Indiana Jones games is Lucasfilm's first 16-bit project (as well as its first for USG), the oddly-titled **Zak MacCraken And The Alien Mindbenders,** a multi-screen arcade adventure in a similar vein to its previous titles, **Labyrinth** and **Maniac Mansion.**

Still in Birmingham, USG's sub-label, GO!, is to release three more Capcom coin-op conversions between now and Autumn. In May there's **Forgotten Worlds** (the much-acclaimed **Side Arms** variant), closely followed by a martial arts affair in the **Street Fighter** vein, **Strider,** and **Ghouls-'n'Ghosts,** which has only just seen the light of day in the arcades over here (see this month's Arcades section for more news).

Another Capcom licence, **Black Tiger,** has been delayed for technical reasons and won't now appear until August. Also due in the distant future are **Heavy Metal,** a tank simulation from Access (the **Leaderboard** boys), **Flight Deck,** a so-far unspecified simulation, **Chicago '30,** a horizontally

Freddy Krueger sharpens up his act as he prepares to bring terror to Elm Street yet again – coming soon to a monitor near you.

More road racing action, but this time in a less exotic setting as OutRun Europa hits the streets.

scrolling gangster shoot 'em up by Toposoft, and the pseudo sequel to **OutRun,** entitled **OutRun Europa.**

Totally unexpectedly, Atari's classic coin-op **Gauntlet II** (one of the biggest ST smashes of last year) will make its Amiga debut next month. A huge improvement on Rainbow Arts' clones **Garrison** and **Garrison II,** the latest version follows the ST's lead by including a simulataneous four player option accessed via an interface which plugs into the printer port. USG also has plans for **Gauntlet III** (based on another coin-op, **Bushido**) well and truly in the line of its pipe.

The second of three Gauntlet games promises plenty of four-player action for Amiga owners and friends.

The Grand Monster Slam, a fantasy sports simulation mentioned back in Issue Three and released next month, is the first of four titles lined up from **Rainbow Arts.** Hot on its heels is **Denaris,** effectively a rewrite of the controversial **Katakis,** this time without any of the similarities to **R-Type** which got Mediagenic so red in the face last year. Two further titles will follow soon after: **Spherical** (a clone of the Tecmos coin-op **Solomon's Key**) and **Journey To The Centre Of The Earth.**

Fans of **Street Fighter** will be pleased to know that the unofficial sequel is just around the corner. **Human Killing Machine** sees the player fighting through the streets of Moscow, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Germany and Beirut. Full review next month. Oh, and if that wasn't enough, yet another beat 'em up, **Vigilante,** is also slated for release. It looks as if there's going to be a lot of midnight oil burned in the Midlands over the next few months.

Will Whacko's Moonwalker stretch the talents of the US Gold programming team?

TOP TEN

(Month Ending January '89)

ATARI ST

1	NE	FALCON	(Spectrum HoloByte/ Mirrorsoft)
2	NE	OPERATION WOLF	(Ocean)
3	1	SPEEDBALL	(Image Works)
4	2	LOMBARD RAC RALLY	(Mandarin)
5	NE	R-TYPE	(Electric Dreams)
6	RE	DUNGEON MASTER	(FTL/Mirrorsoft)
7	NE	AFTERBURNER	(Activision)
8	3	HOSTAGES	(Infogrames)
9	NE	HEROES OF THE LANCE	(SSI)
10	5	ELITE	(Firebird)

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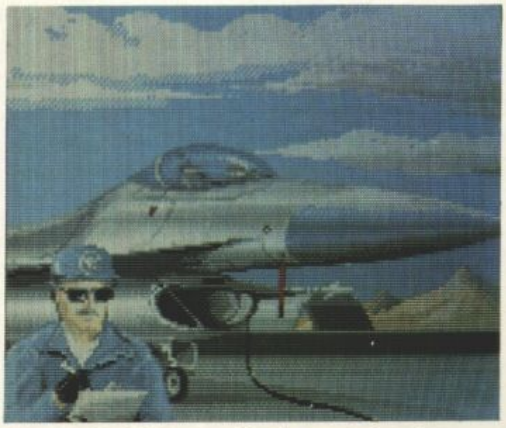
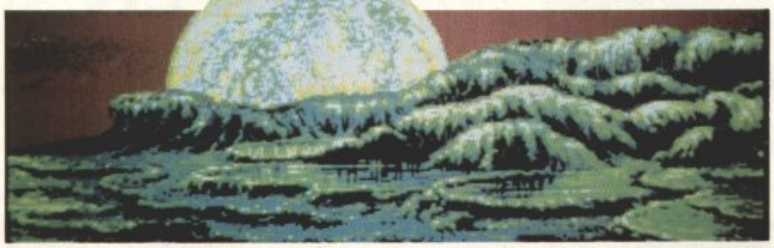
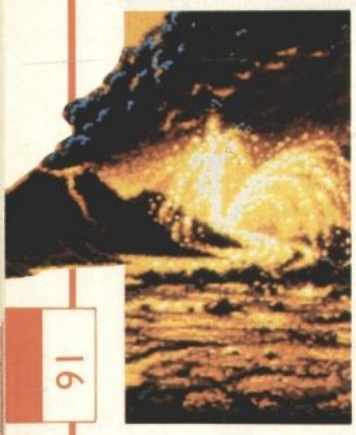
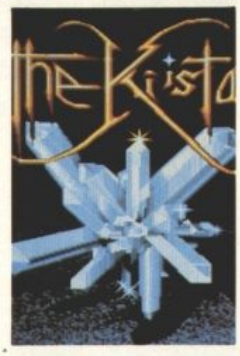


Mirrorsoft's Falcon**: straight in at number 1.**

A KLEAR WINNER?







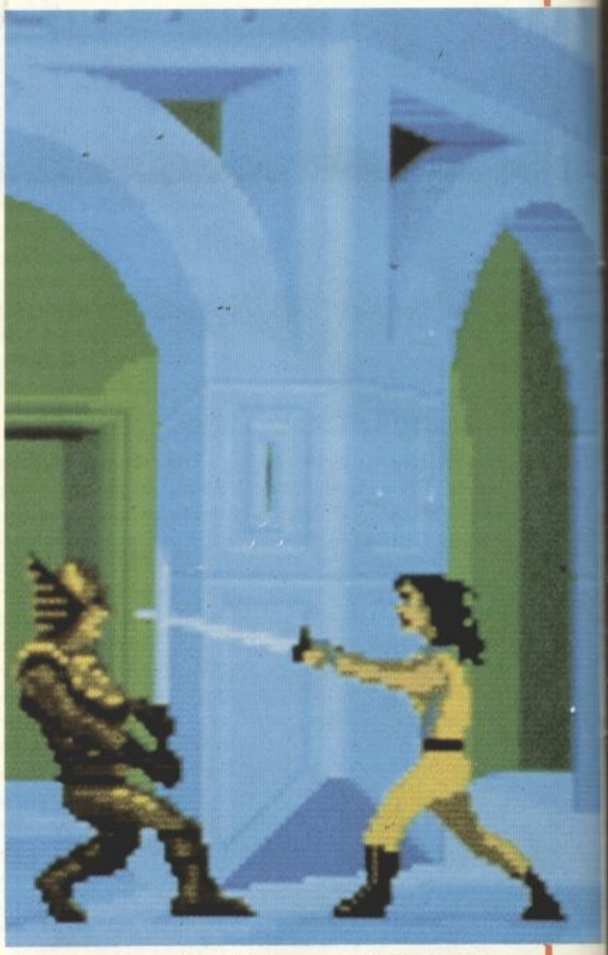
The 60 different backdrop screens were drawn by The Kristal's artistic director Mike Haigh and David Hardy, perhaps better known for some of his Issac Asimov book illustrations.

IN 1986 work began on a game, its scenario originally conceived as a stage play in the late 70's. Now, over a decade since its conception, **The Kristal** has surfaced – courtesy of Addictive.

Playing the lead role of the spoonerist space pirate Dancis Frake, your task is to explore the Kreema system in search of Kristal Of Konos.

The Kristal is an unusual blend of arcade and adventure styles. Joystick controlled exploration is combined with text-adventure style input in a similar manner to Melbourne House's ageing 8-bit 'classic' **Zim Sala Bim**. You can walk and talk to your heart's content, with some people being more helpful than others. Sword fighting and space shoot 'em up scenes are interspersed throughout to give a unique flavour.

But best of all is a lengthy burst of sampled narration from the astronomer older than time itself, Patrick Moore. A price of £29.95 has been fixed, and the game should be released sometime in February, which means a review in the next issue.



Armed combat is a way of life in The Kristal. The sword fight se-quence was created by Neill Glancey, a black belt in the oriental art of Katnagari – 'The Swift Sword'.

THALAMUS THINGS

THE boys from Berkshire, Thalamus, who up until now have concentrated firmly on the Commodore 64, have a whole host of ST and Amiga titles for 1989. First to appear will be two games by newcomers Esprit, the conversions of the graphically excellent platform collect 'em up **Hawkeye** and **Search For Sharla,** an animated adventure in the vein of Mike Singleton's classic **Lords Of Midnight.**

March will see a bevvy of titles appearing, including the **R-Type** 'tribute' **Armalyte** that in the transition to 16-bit has been tweaked and updated to include a multi-directional scrolling play area larger than the screen.

Unfortunately, **Armalyte**'s predecessor, **Delta,** originally written by Stavros Fasoulas (who has recently finished his stint for the Finnish Army and has now given up programming to concentrate on writing a science fiction novel) won't make it onto 16-bit due to the similarity between the two games.

Meanwhile, the conversion of Thalamus' first ever release, **Sanxion,** has been delayed, and now nobody's got a clue as to when it's likely to see the light of day. "It'll definitely appear sooner or later," is all we could get from Thalamus' Paul Cooper.

Martin Walker's **Hunter's Moon,** the game which 'inspired' elements of **Cosmic Pirates,** is in the early stages of conversion. The Amiga version is ahead of the ST, but Cooper hopes he can make the ST catch up in time for a simultaneous release in April.

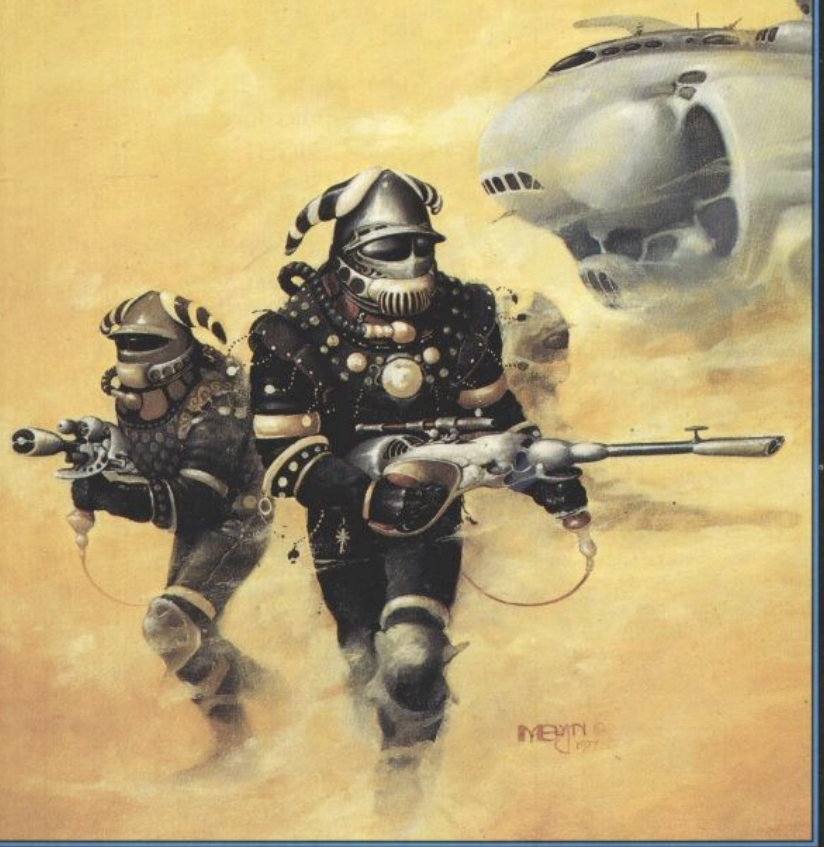
Another of Fasoulas' creations, **Quedexs,** a multi-directional scrolling arcade puzzle game that was originally titled **Marbles** (!), is being translated to 16-bit by Mario from the Dutch programming team, The Boys Without Brains. Interestingly enough, Epyx is writing its own version of **Quedex** for release in the States in the Spring.

Mario from TBWB is also beavering away on **Bamboo,** which at the moment is Amiga only, with as ST version being looked into. With a release not due until Autumn, it's all very much in the early stages of development, so there isn't even much information on what type of game it is yet.

Finally there's **H.E.L.,** a **Defender**-style shoot 'em up being programmed by Blit (also converting **Armalyte**). At the moment it's 'on the backburner' due to a few delays that have slowed work down somewhat and isn't scheduled to appear until this Christmas (shriek!)

CAPTAIN FIZZ

MEETS THE BLASTER-TRONS



CAPTAIN FIZZ Meets The Blaster-Trons
The message is simple: co-operate or die!

It's double fun and double trouble all the way in Captain Fizz, the most exciting simultaneous two-player game you and a friend are ever likely to play. It's a whole new world of split-screen, high-speed action, as **both** of you take on the nasty Blaster-Trons infesting the planet Icarus.

Yup, it's a tough mission alright, but you might just be able to do it if between you you've got the right blend of co-operation, courage, laser-hot reflexes, tactical sense... and brains. The action is fast and furious in Captain Fizz, but if you can't work out the right tactics you'll both be dead meat.

There are 22 levels of savage and relentless action to battle through before you reach your objective, the central computer that's causing the evil infestation. You'll never get there, though, unless you put your heads together and co-operate; your buddy can't do it on his own, and neither can you. This is one program where even the easy games are hard. So remember — united you stand, but divided you fall...

Warning: this game is *impossible* to beat on your own.

Two joysticks required for two-player game
Screen Shots are from the Atari ST. Version

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NEWS

War is declared in Middle Earth to kick off the year for the ever-expanding Virgin software empire.

VIRGIN VENTURES

THE VIRGIN/ Mastertronic software empire's first major project for 1989 is **War In Middle Earth**, an interpretation of JRR Tolkein's epic fantasy novel **Lord Of The Rings**,

due for release on the Melbourne House label. A huge strategy game/adventure set in a fantasy world of trolls, hobbits and wizards, **War in Middle Earth** follows the book's plot closely, setting the player the task of destroying the evil God Sauron's all-powerful magic ring.

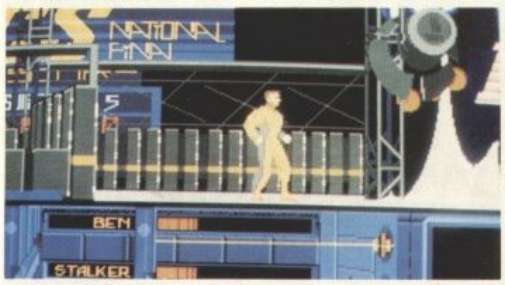
The strategy section's environment boasts a comprehensive scrolling map of Middle Earth, populated by hundreds of computer-controlled characters on the side of both good and evil. Gandalf, Aragorn, Farmer Giles and of course the nine Nazgul (Black Riders sent out by Sauron to recover his ring) have all been included. **War In Middle Earth** is due for release on ST, Amiga and PC next month at a price of £24.99.

A 'two on two' basketball simulation, **Slam Dunk**, will be the first release of the year on the Virgin label. Price and release date have yet to be decided, but the game will probably retail at £19.95.

On the budget front, the conglomerate's two budget labels, Mastertronic and Richochet, will release all future product at £9.99 for Amiga, ST, and PC versions (with PC packages incorporating both 3½" and 5¼" disks. Games scheduled to appear on the Mastertronic label are **Chase, Venom, Shard Of Inovar, Knight Games** and **The Last Trooper**, while the Ricochet label will kick off the year with **Little Computer People** and **Hacker**.

Virgin's specialist board game label, Leisure Genius, has both **Risk** and **Monopoly Deluxe** lined up to appear this month (the former is available on all formats while the latter is ST only).

GRANDSLAM GIGGLES



Arnold Schwarzenegger, parades his new trim physique through Grandslam's latest.

GRANDSLAM's 16-bit interpretation of Arnold Schwarzenegger's turkey, **The Running Man**, is nearing completion. The licensed game puts you in control of Arnold himself, and has you running, jumping, punching and kicking your way through horizontally scrolling scenery, solving a sub-game puzzle between levels. Fortunately, the game looks better than the film. Full review next month.

As mentioned last issue, the long promised 16-bit

incarnations of Namco's **PacLand** are well and truly under way, as is the second binary interpretation of Gerry Anderson's cult television series **Thunderbirds**. Grandslam reckons its game is far more representative of the original puppet show than Firebird's 8-bit budget effort of over two years ago.

Meanwhile, development has only just begun on its more recently acquired licence – DC Thompson's **Dandy** comic. More details when we have them.

TOP TEN

(Month Ending January '89)

IBM PC AND COMPATIBLES

1	NE	F19 STEALTH FIGHTER (Microprose)
2	1	FLIGHT SIMULATOR III (Sublogic)
3	NE	LEISURE SUIT LARRY LOOKING FOR LOVE (Sierra)
4	6	PSION CHESS (Psion)
5	3	KINGS QUEST TRIPLE PACK (Sierra)
6	NE	KINGS QUEST IV (Sierra)
7	NE	ROCKET RANGER (Mirrorsoft)
8	NE	STAR TREK (Firebird)
9	NE	SOLID GOLD TRIPLE PACK (US Gold)
10	NE	HEROES OF THE LANCE (SSI)

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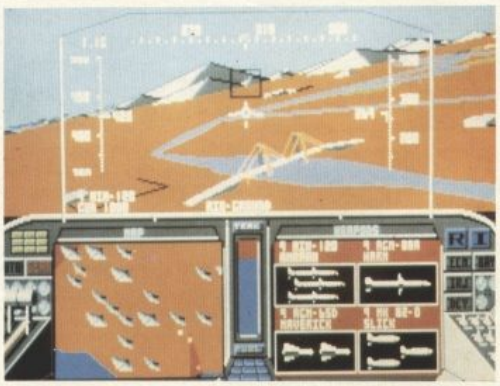

F19 Stealth Fighter **sneaks in to number 1.**

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PALACE SOFTWARE

DIGITAL MAGIC

THE NAME is new, but development house Digital Magic Software was actually formed in July last year. The Cheshire-based crew says it's "keen to develop arcade quality software by using the hardware to its full capacity on both machines." Following an increasingly popular trend, DMS is first developing titles on the Amiga before porting them over to the ST – "with the intent to keep gameplay identical while pushing the machines to their limits."

And it's putting its product where its mouth is with its first two releases: **Trained Assassin** and **Scorpion.** Both games are priced at £24.95 and due for release around now.

Inside the castle of DMS' multidirectional scrolling progressive platform and shoot 'em up cum combat game, Scorpion.

One of the vertically scrolling levels of Digital Magic Software's progressive shoot 'em up Trained Assassin.

Horizontally scrolling mayhem in Trained Assassin. **Shields and different types of laser are some of the enhancements you can expect to collect along the way.**

ACOMIC EDGE

JUST WHEN you want to forget all about the cold winds and snow (what snow?), The Edge is set to release its second game starring everybody's favourite fat feline ... **Garfield: A Winter's Tail** sees Jim Davis' puss in more arcade-style adventure.

Even better news for his furry fans is that The Edge has a series of Garfield games planned for this year – a sort of binary yearbook, kicking off with the aforementioned Tail, there will be some Summer fun, Halloween hilarity for Autumn and plenty of Christmas chortles at the end of the year.

Peanuts-pushers can look forward to an egg-citing Easter with a game featuring very prominently everyone else's favourite dog, Snoopy. Surprisingly, the United Features Syndicate approached The Edge with the licence, having been impressed with its handling of Garfield. And and and, there's another comic strip licence in the pipeline, but we won't know what it is for a month or two.

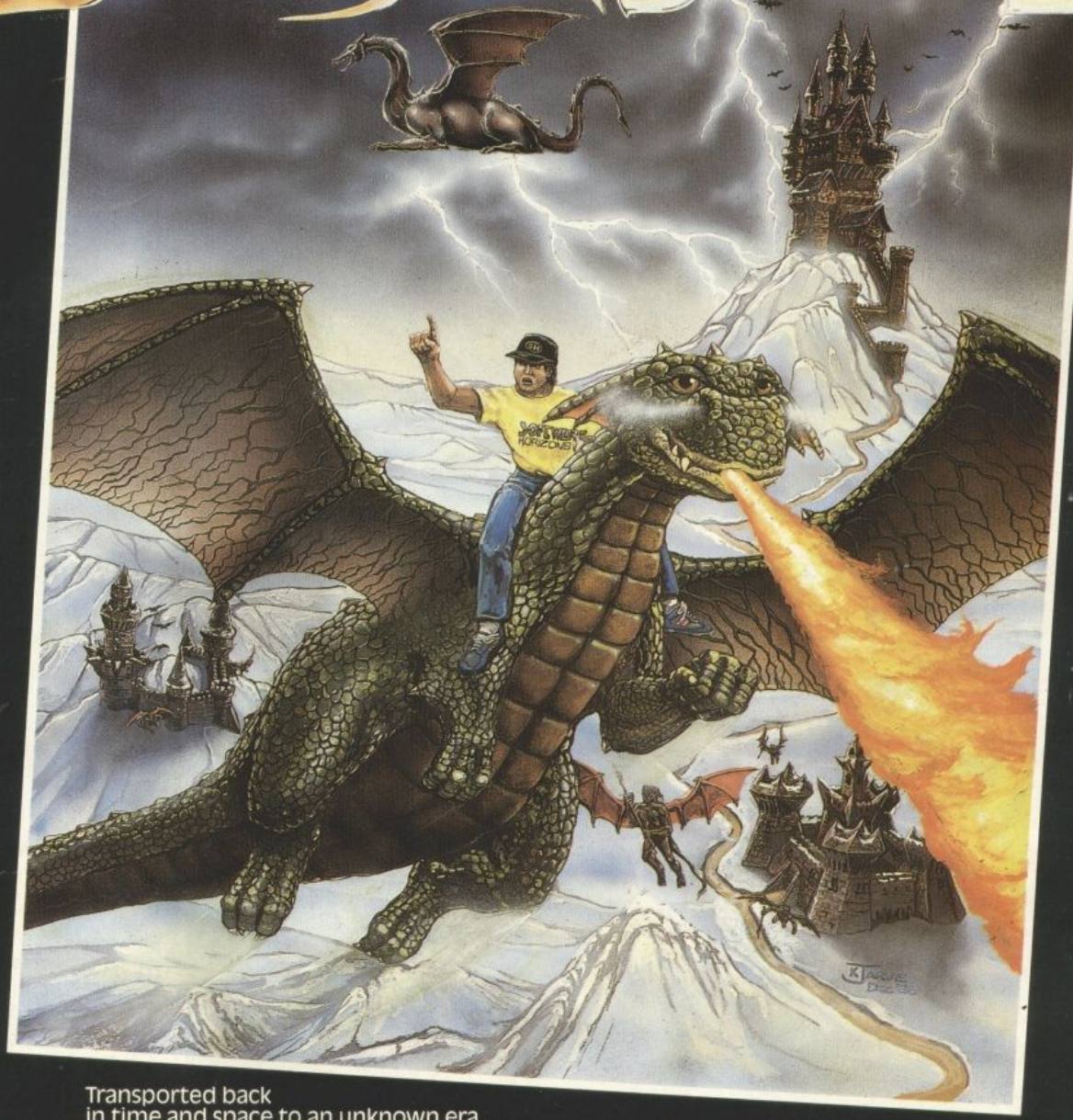
More imminently The Edge is releasing its 16-bit incarnations of **Inside Outing,** a very interactive forced perspective arcade adventure, featuring over 50 fun-packed rooms. You can pick up a telephone if it rings, or fiddle with the balls on a snooker table in your search for some missing jewels.

On The Edge's arcade-style label, Ace, there's Taito's shoot 'em up **Darius,** which after a considerable wait, is due for release around March.

DOMARK BUYS ITS TV LICENCE

IT'S BEEN said that you can't beat Bruce Forsyth on a Saturday night because he's so CHUMMY! But bingo lingo, clickety clicks, it's time to take your pick of the six ... with bubbly Bob Monkhouse and his Full House, recently licensed by Domark for its TV Games label. Incidentally, someone suggested that Domark should produce a new arcade game starring Blockbusters' Bob Holness and Bob Monkhouse. The title? **Double Bobble** ... And on the subject of coin-op conversions, work recently began on three of Domark's Atari coin-op conversions: the vertically scrolling aquatic obstacle course. **Toobin,** the multi-directional scrolling police story **APB,** and the split screen 3D **Zybots.**

DRAGONSCAPE



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R-TYPE

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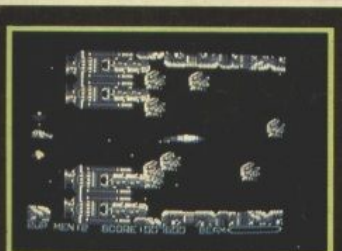
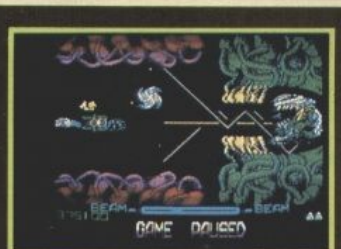


Commodore 64 screen shots shown



Spectrum screen shots shown

ELECTRIC DREAMS SOFTWARE

Available on Commodore 64/128 cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Spectrum (£9.99), Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Atari ST (£19.99) and on Amiga (£24.99).

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LICENSED TO ELECTRIC DREAMS

Cosmic

Outlaws producing pirates? Whatever is the world coming to? Ciarán Brennan adjusts his eyepatch and sets his parrot for warp factor nine.

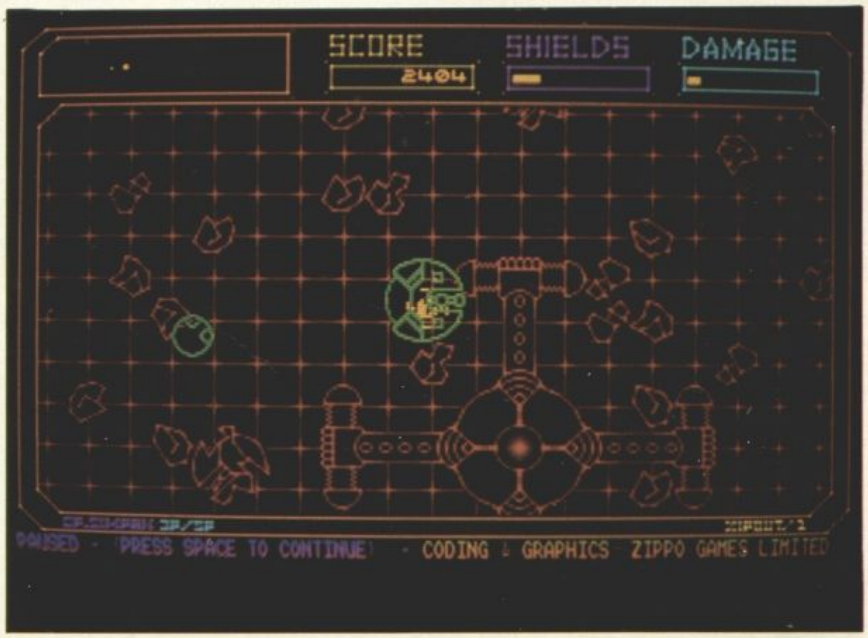
Guy Manly is a sort of romantic rogue whose past exploits have led him to life of crime in the deepest space lanes. However, he's not all that experienced in this piracy lark and has fallen under the wing of a shady group known as The Council which has given him a home and a new job.

The home is NEST51, a den of piracy and corruption hidden in deepest space, and the job? Guy has now become an apprentice space pirate, set up and given his training by The Council – which asks nothing in return except a small tax on his 'earnings' ('small' being anything between 90 and 98 per cent).

As Guy Manly, your task is to develop both your ship and your piracy skills in a deceptively complex mix of arcade action and monetary strategy. In keeping with the covert nature of the plot, the game has been programmed by a mysterious crew known as Zippo Games.

The Manchester-based company is reputed to be involved in the development of Nintendo games for the Japanese market and only devised the Cosmic Pirate concept as a spare-time project – whew! Rumour has it that the company is working on another top secret Outlaw product – but don't say that we told you.

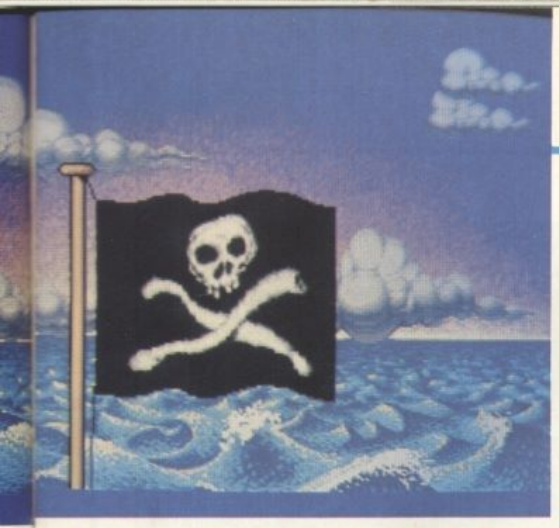
The fake keypad effect works excellently, with one set of options leading to another and every choice clearly displayed. Constant text messages keep the player updated with status information.

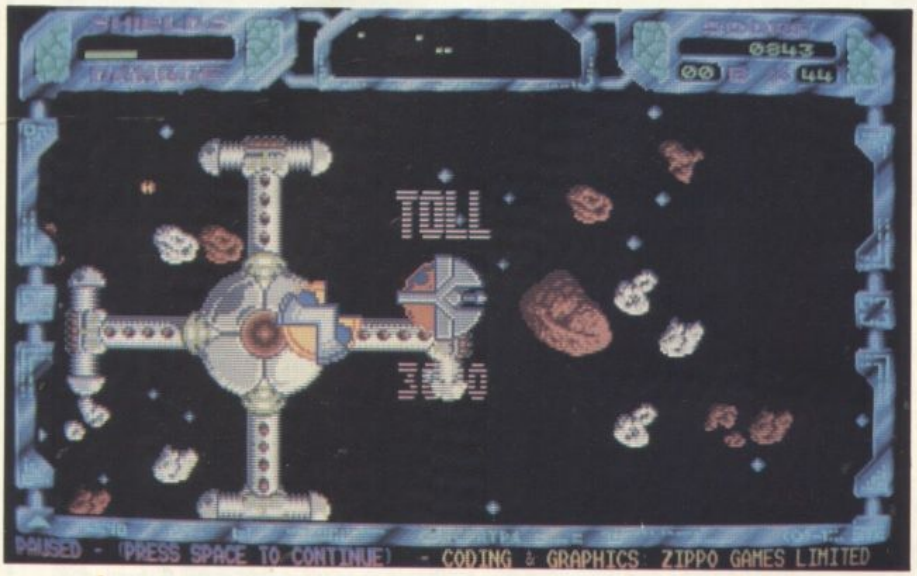


Novice pirates can't be expected to launch unprepared into the treacherous void of deep space. Therefore, The Council provides a number of simulators for practice purposes. Each simulator represents a real game situation, with the filled graphics replaced by similar vector constructions. Because the element of danger has been eliminated, simulated action earns nothing – in fact some of the more advanced simulators actually cost money!

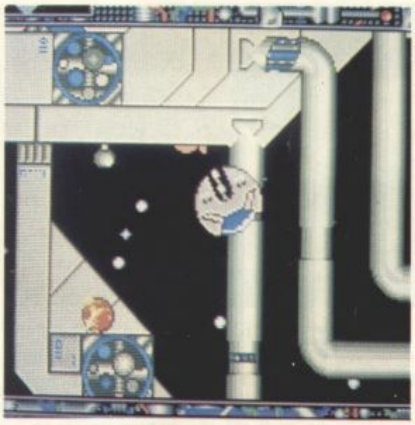
Having left 'The Nest', the pirate heads for the nearest Toll Gate (found by following the 'T' icon). The way is blocked by hostile aliens of varying power and danger – blasting these is the only way to earn enough points to access the Toll Gate.

Pirate



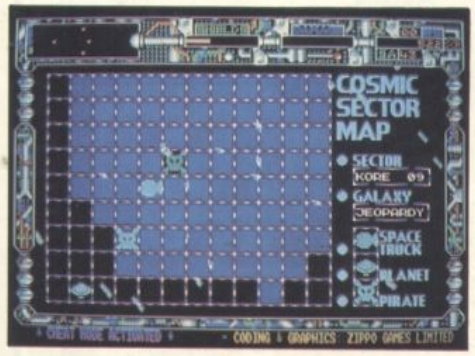


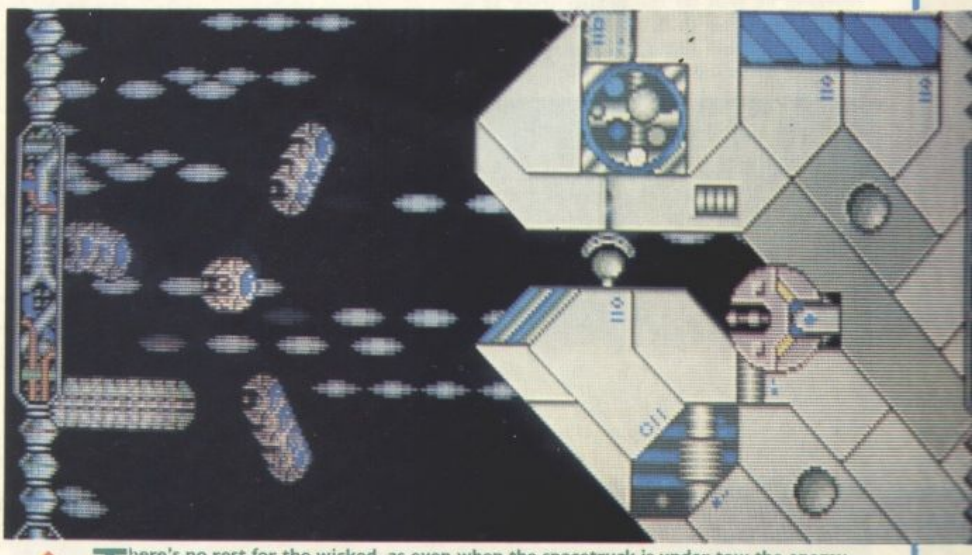
Basically, the object is to search the spacelanes for big fish-like spacetrucks such as this one. Once found, the idea is to blast the truck's moving parts and knock it out of commission. Dormant trucks are dragged back to the nest to be plundered of anything of value, with the proceeds going to the spacepirate's equivalent of a Swiss bank account. There are 26 trucks in total, some of them larger than others but all coming in the strangest of aquatic guises.



Surrounded by space debris and often misleading signposts, the floating Toll Gates are the doorways through the galaxy. Tolls vary from gate to gate, but you'll soon be put right if you approach without enough shileros. The entrance to hyperspace through the Toll Gate is one of the most spectacular visual effects in the game (next to your ship exploding, but you don't realy want to see that – do you?).

The current space sector is displayed as a squared matrix measuring 12 x 9. Subsections are colour-coded according to toll, with black sections accessed for free, but orange sections (the most expensive) charging a massive 7,000 units. The 'fish' icon represents the nearest spacetruck, the skull and crossbones icons are pirates while the planet icon is self-explantory.

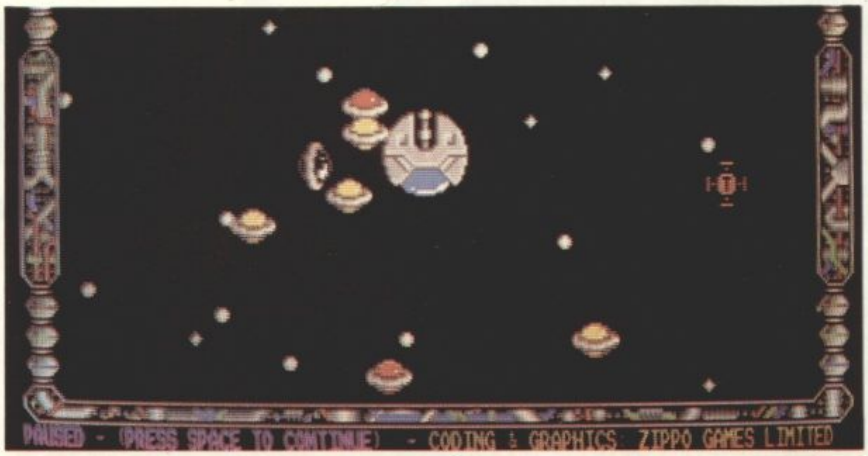




There's no rest for the wicked, as even when the spacetruck is under tow the enemy drones still attack in force. Allow yourself to breathe a little easier though, as this is a sort of bonus section where the opposition doesn't do any damage.

Fancy upgrading to a Tesco 'Supa' shield, or an Eveready HP99 drive unit? Then this is the place to do it. Cash earned by completing successful missions can be used to buy extra weapons, power units and shields. The lower end models are easily attained after only a couple of missions, but you'll probably be approaching pirate retirement before you can afford a Sony Cutter weapons system supported by a Bimota 'Elite' drive unit.

Extra points are available to pirates who venture towards the planet in their current space sector. No great danger is posed in this section, but planets generally lie well off the beaten track so a decision must be made as to whether the points gained will offset the points spent in travelling there and back.



Dying aliens occasionally leave a small bonus token in their wake which should be collected for extra points and bonuses. The most frequent tokens, Yellow, add 50 points to the pirate's score, but other colours add even greater benefits; White adds a smart bomb (activated by holding down the fire button instead of tapping it); Red kills everything on screen and Black splits into loads of extra tokens. Be warned though, tokens which are not collected turn into deadly homing missiles.

Piracy is literally a cut-throat business, so watch out for the appearance of rival brigands as you head towards your prey. Although the rewards for defeating a fellow pirate are incredibly high, the resulting clash is a fight to the death and should be avoided by all but the most confident of brigands. However, if you're greatly in debt to The Council at any stage you may have no choice, as your nestmates come in search of the price that's suddenly appeared on your head.

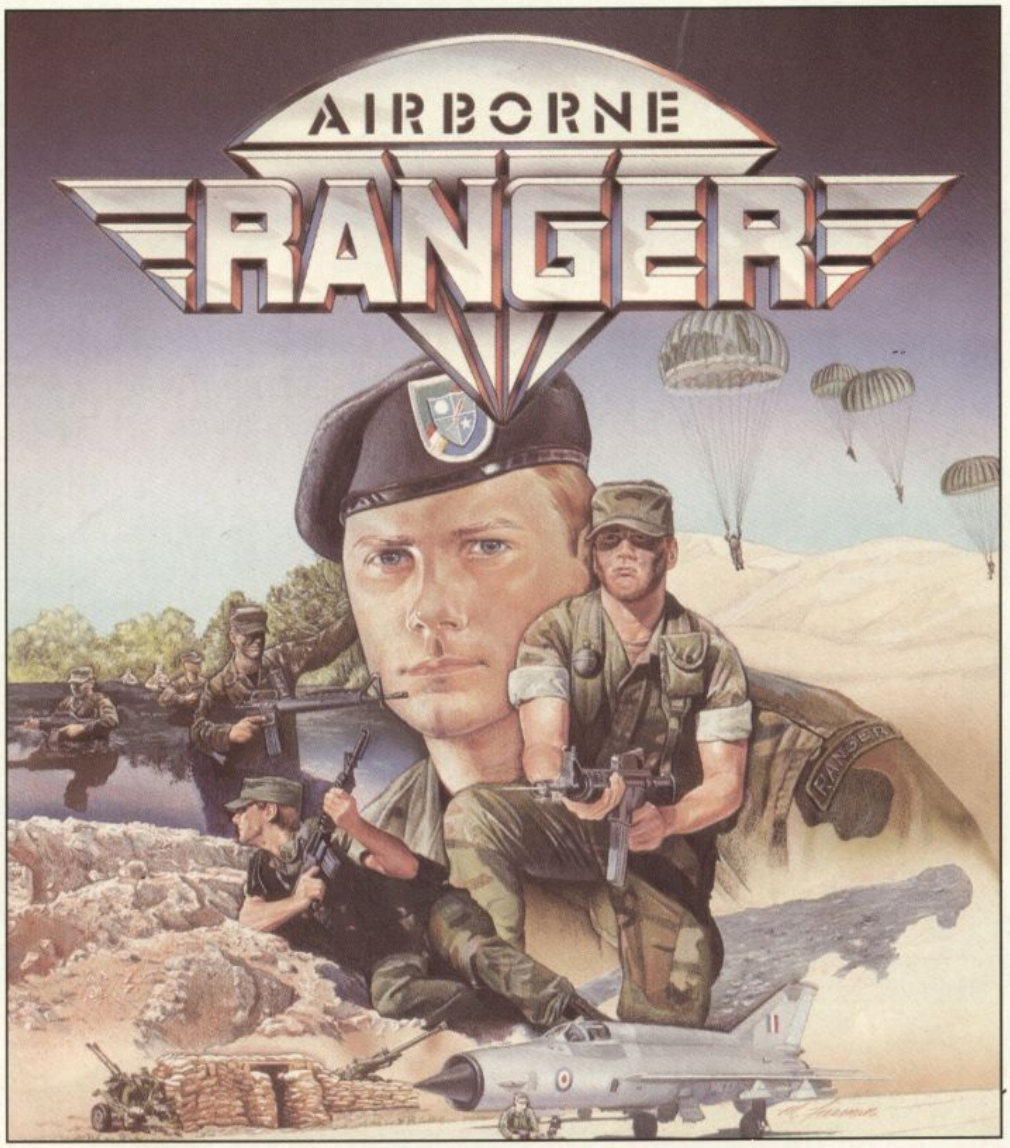
A Cosmic Pirate can best be described as a thinking man's shoot 'em up, combining tricky hand eye co-ordination with frequent bouts of crucial decision making. Borrowing a little in style from such 8-bit innovations as Morpheus and Hunters Moon, the full capacity of the more powerful machines has been used to take the concept to its logical conclusion. Presentationally, the subtle but addictive soundtrack and the stereo spot effects combine perfectly with the functional graphic style. If there is any fault to be found in Cosmic Pirate, it's the fact that there is no real goal to be reached, but looked at from another angle this just means that it could theoretically last forever. Ultimately, this is an engrossing and addictive challenge that will have you coming back for more long after flashier shoot 'em ups have been forgotten.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	83%
PLAYABILITY	87%
VALUE	79%

OVERALL 86%

ST Because of technical limitations, Zippo has had to drop the stereo spot effects and may have to limit the number of saved games available. Otherwise the Atari version looks and feels almost identical to the Amiga and should be on the shelves within the next month.

IS REAL EXCITEMENT



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IK+ contains superb graphics and a great deal of attention has been put into the fully animated sunset – right down to the leaves falling from the tree and piling up on the ground. The fighters' shadows are even slanting away from the sun. In addition there are dozens of features, adjustable by keyboard, such as the game speed, the music volume and various secret codes.

So, if you are ready for the ultimate in Martial Arts, IK+ is for you!

Now available for the Amiga at £24.99, also available on C64 cassette and disk, Spectrum, Amstrad cassette and disk, and Atari ST.

Amiga screen shots shown

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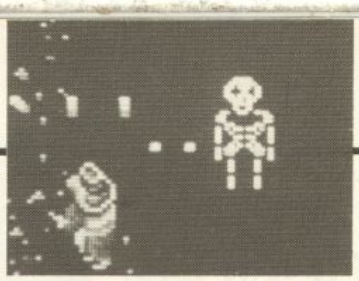
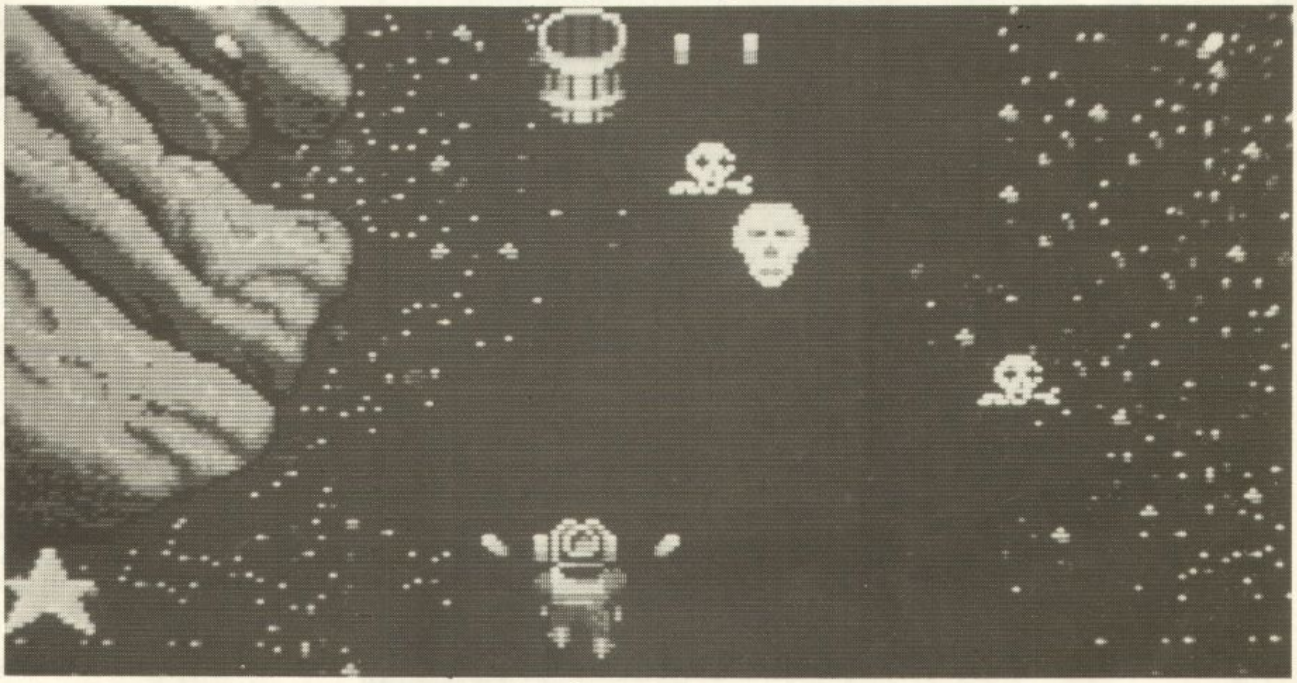
SYSTEM 3

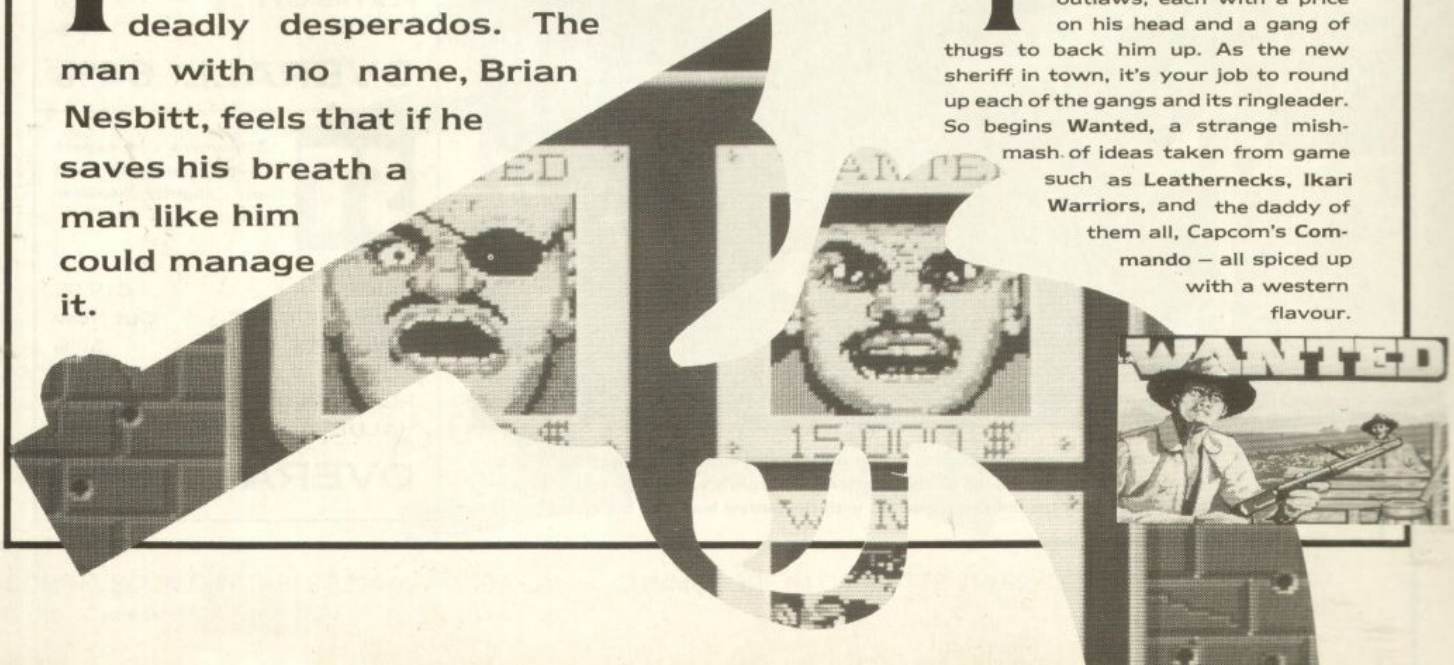


Wanted

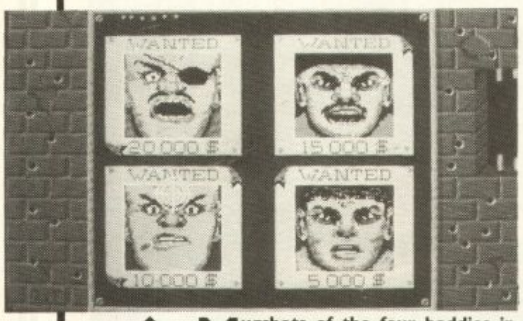


In true spaghetti tradition, Infogrames' latest asks you to round up a band of deadly desperados. The man with no name, Brian Nesbitt, feels that if he saves his breath a man like him could manage it.

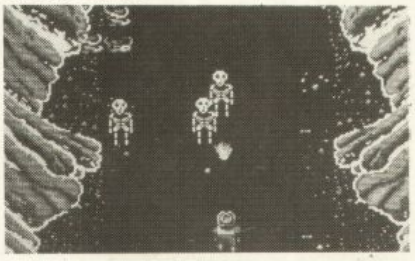
1880. The crime-ridden state of Arkansas is living under the tyranny of four rival outlaws, each with a price on his head and a gang of thugs to back him up. As the new sheriff in town, it's your job to round up each of the gangs and its ringleader. So begins **Wanted**, a strange mish-mash of ideas taken from game such as **Leathernecks**, **Ikari Warriors**, and the daddy of them all, Capcom's **Commando** – all spiced up with a western flavour.



REVIEW

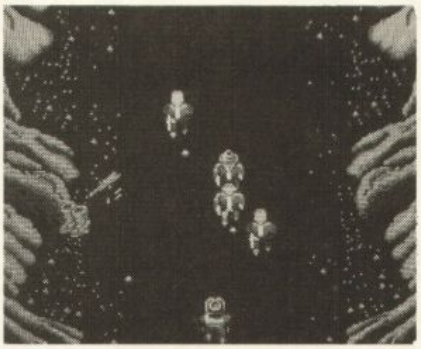


Mugshots of the four baddies in question and their respective bounties adorn the jailhouse wall, waiting for you to select one with your gunsight. Before you do that though, try your hand at making some pretty pock-mark patterns on the wall. Pay special attention to the amount of cash offered as a reward, as the meaner the baddie the higher the price – and the more treacherous the mission.

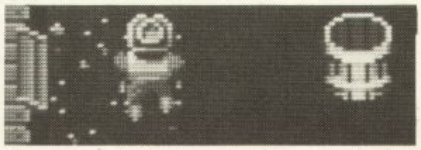


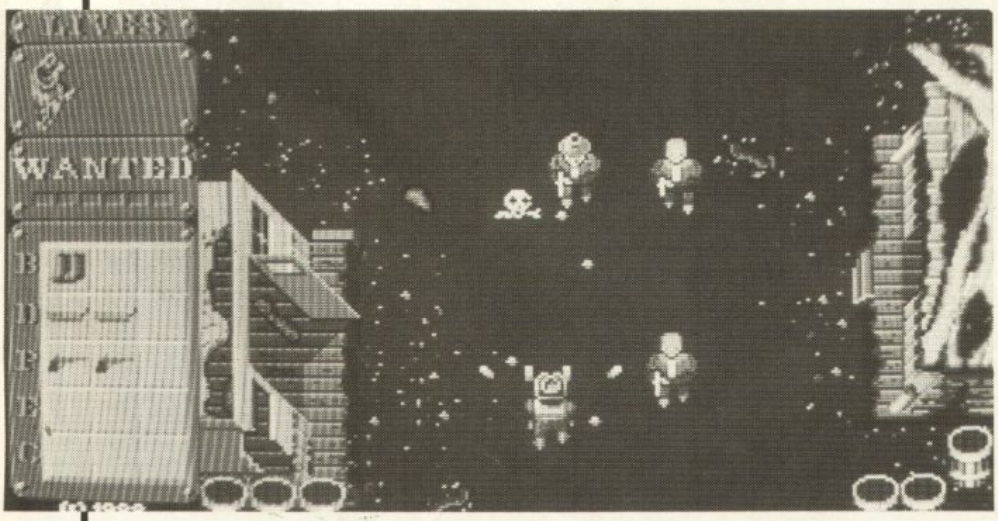
KABOOM! When the going gets tough, the tough throw dynamite. More deadly than the grenades in Ikari or Leathernecks – the dynamite acts as a smart bomb, blowing away everyone and everything unfortunate enough to be on screen at the time.

Each gang has a particular hideout with special features and obstacles of its very own. Here you've tracked a gang down on the railroad, where gunmen wait on the sidings and lethal barells roll down the screen. Fortunately, deft use of a Colt revolver (that fires an unrealistic six shots simultaneously) will send most of the barrels flying safely backwards.

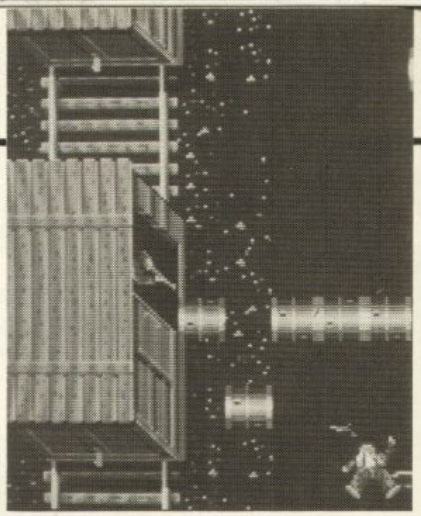


The stationary barrels that crop up from time to time may look innocent enough, but blasting them could reveal any of a number of useful 'power ups', such as a rifle that increases your firepower, riding boots that act as a speed-up, extra ammo, an invincibility shield, a bag of gold or, if you're less lucky, a chomping skull that reduces your inventory.





Unlike Capcom's Commando, which is split into several independent sections with a massive firefight at the end of each, each mission consists of a huge trek through one continually scrolling landscape before a shootout with the outlaw leader at the end.



A

This would have been an admirable attempt at the Commando genre, had it not suffered from so many faults. Firstly there's no simultaneous two-player option, a feature that is becoming more of a standard than a novelty in games of this type. The collision detection is suspect, and baddies can be left standing even after you're sure that you've hit them. There's also very little variety in the gameplay. Ikari Warriors lets you wade through rivers, blow up pillboxes, ride in tanks and so on – Wanted features no such frills. Holding down the fire button and avoiding the bullets seems to be enough to see you safely through the entire game no trouble, and when you do die there's an annoying wait to get control over your next man. Singularly these faults don't pose too much of a problem, but when they all appear together they add up to spoil what was potentially a very good game.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	69%
SOUND	64%
PLAYABILITY	71%
VALUE	68%

OVERALL 64%

ST

ST owners can expect similar gameplay and only slightly weaker sound.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	69%
SOUND	62%
PLAYABILITY	71%
VALUE	68%

OVERALL 64%

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Atari ST screen shots

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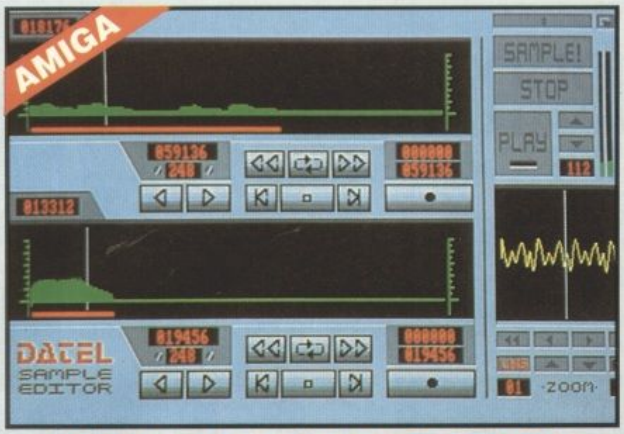

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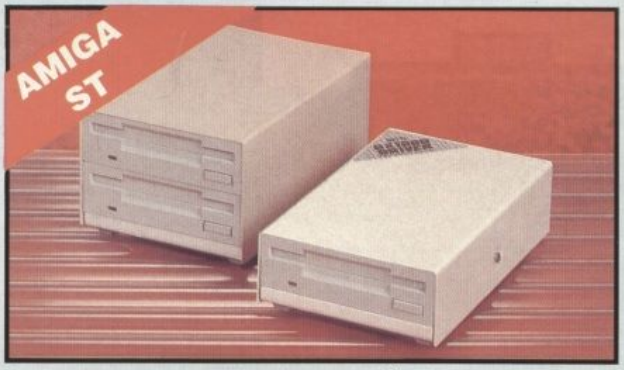

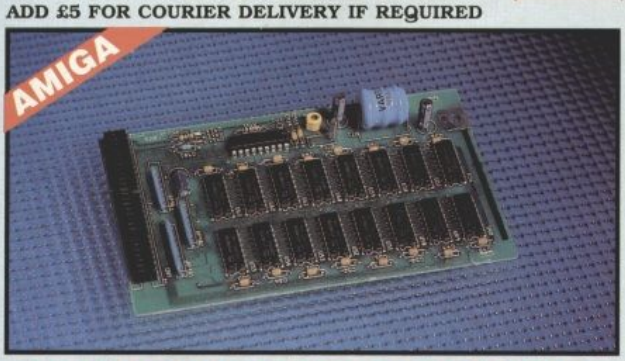

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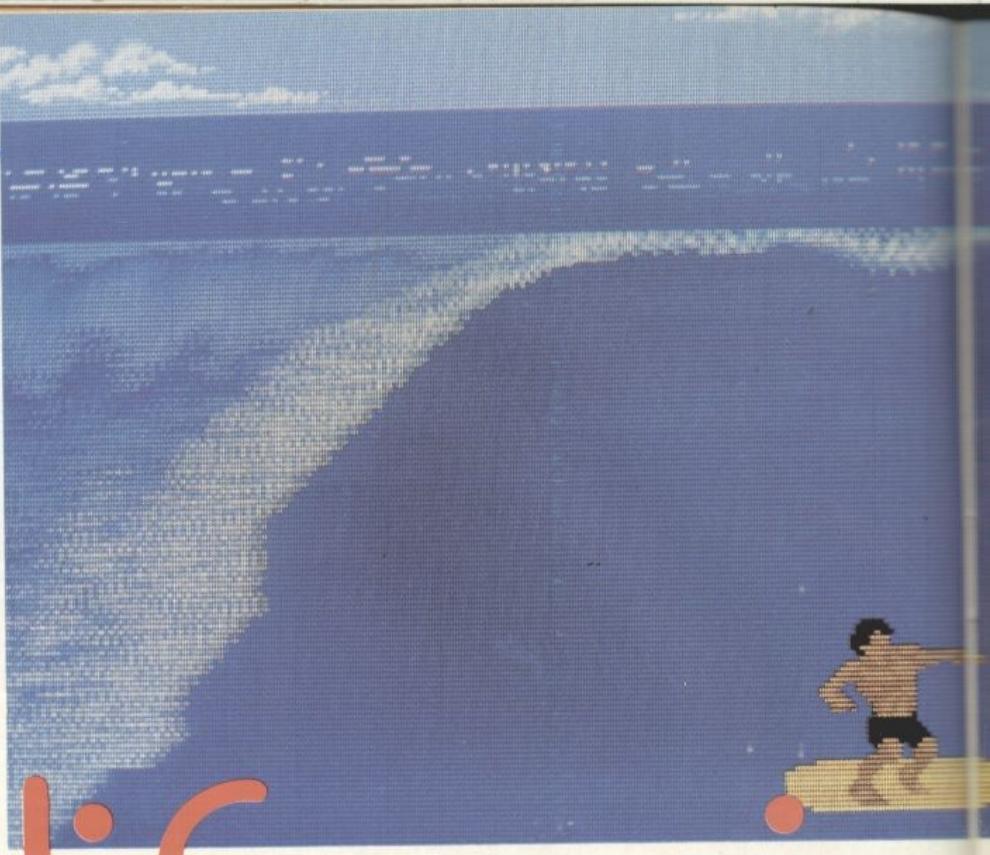
Brian Nesbitt trades his bifocals for a pair of Aviator Ray-Bans and heads for the coast...



California

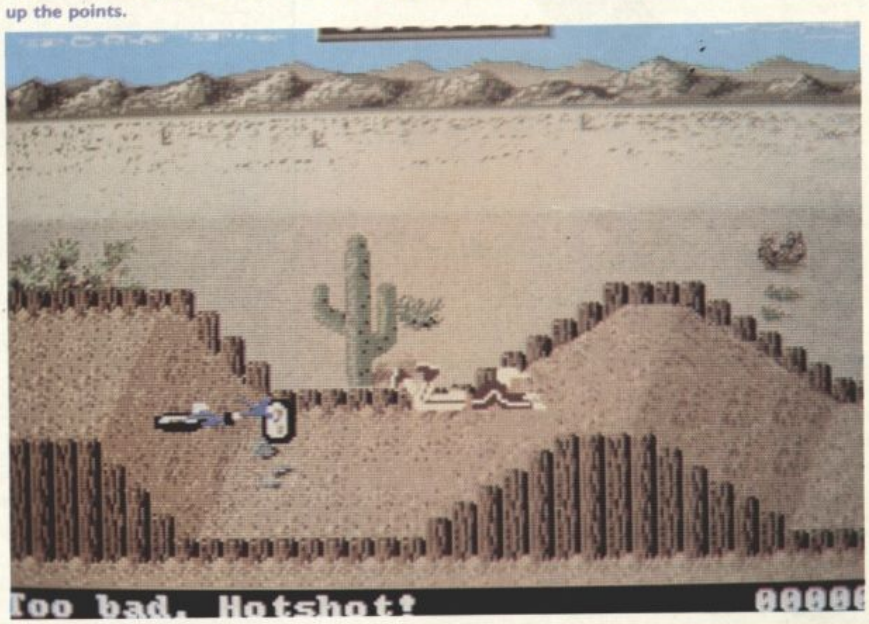
It's almost six years since America witnessed the advent of Epyx's near-legendary **Games** series. The eight events of **Summer Games** were all as playable as they were visually and aurally impressive.

Most importantly, **Summer Games** marked the arrival of a sports simulation radically different from the more aggressive likes of, say, Konami's **Track And Field**. More interaction and skill is required than merely vigorously shaking the joystick.

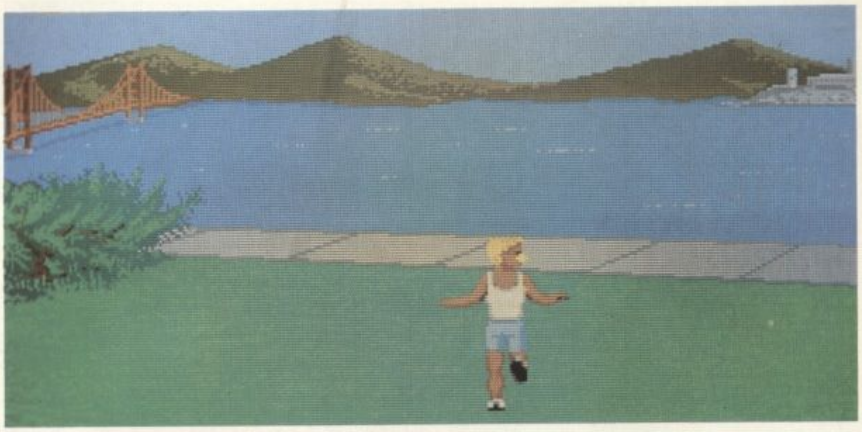
An equally astounding sequel followed nearly two years later, but it wasn't until the arrival of the snow-bound **Winter Games** that 16-bit owners got to get to grips with this unique collection of mini-simulations.

The ice and snow featured less prominently in their last addition to the series. **World Games**, and in total contrast Epyx has now brought us to the clammy clime of California and six new events.

BMX BIKE RACING. It may be a little old-fashioned nowadays, but Bicycle Motorcross is still a fun-packed and exciting sport. Set on a hazard-filled course in the Californian desert, this event demands, speed, timing and a lot of endurance to make it across the bumps and dips (or whoop-ti-dos as they're known over there). Plenty of cheeky stunts pump up the points.



SURFING. Get down for an awesome cutback with the white water breaking from both sides. Points are scored for 'use' of the wave: that is how long you stay aboard, how many turns you make and how long you stay 'in the tube'. 'Catching air', or jumping on and off the board, also impresses the five judges whose individual marks are averaged out to result in your final score.

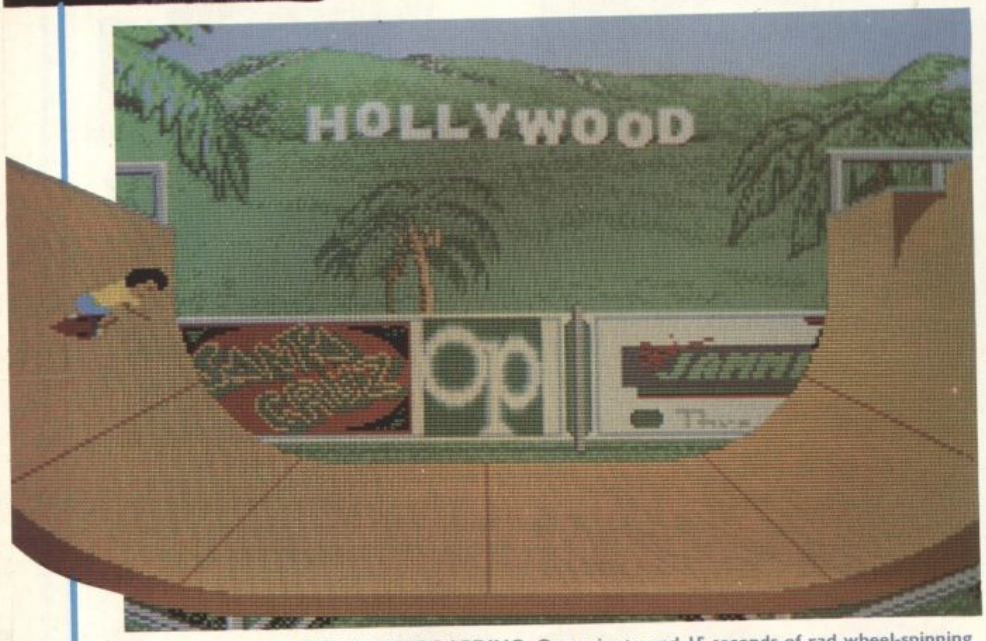


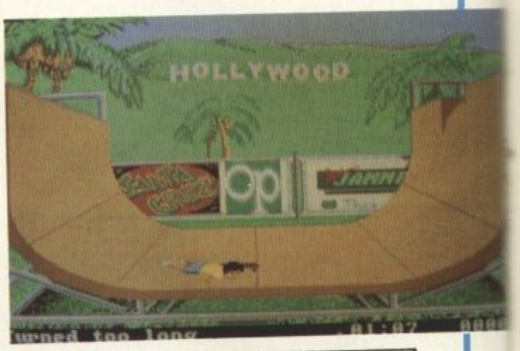
FOOT BAG. Also known as 'hackeysacking', this event involves juggling a small bean-filled sack using any part of the body except the hands. Points are scored for keeping the sack in the air and for performing yet more 'stunts' including Half Axles, Full Exles, Horseshoes, Jesters and Double Arches. Extra points are awarded for performing a variety of stunts within the time limit.

Games

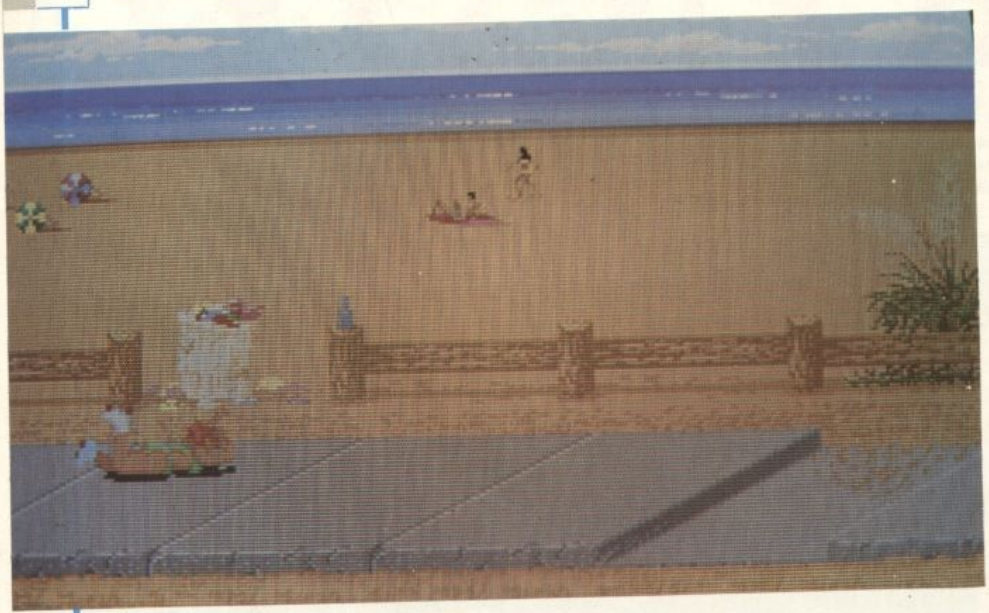
FLYING DISK. When Mr Frisbie started his pie company late last century, he probably never dreamed that his name would become more famous for the plates that his wares were baked on than for the pies themselves. But that's exactly what happened as Yale University students began tossing the tin dishes to one another and invented the world famous sport of 'Frisbee' throwing. The name has changed a little and a few rules have been added, but basically this event involves nothing more complex than tossing and catching a Frisbee along the length of a field. Points are scored for accuracy of throw and the catcher's skill, which is why a diving catch is worth more than a simple standing effort.

Epyx presents CALIFORNIA GAMES





HALF PIPE SKATEBOARDING. One minute and 15 seconds of rad wheel-spinning kicks off the games, with competitors scoring points for flashing style and cunning stunts. Speed builds up as the player rolls from side to side, with stunts executed when the desired speed has been reached. Only two falls are allowed, with topple number three sending the player off to spectatorville.



ROLLER SKATING. Take a glide along the boardwalk with the wind in your hair and four wheels on each foot. Gain speed and then score points for avoiding or jumping obstacles. Extra points are scored for skaters with the grace and poise to achieve spins and spinning jumps.

A

It seems that no real attempt has been made to take advantage of the Amiga's massive capabilities as this looks remarkably like the C64 original. The Epyx's Games series has always been comparitively weaker on the 16-bit machine than on 8-bit, but this is the poorest showing to date. The only graphic saving grace is the bright colour scheme in keeping with the summery setting, but surely detail and smooth animation should have been the order of the day. Sound? Yes, there is some, but even this is nowhere near as impressive as it should have been. Most events are accompanied by a throbbing soundtrack, along with spot effects which seem to have been tacked on as an afterthought, but even this is only occasionally amusing and more often than not uninteresting. The most important aspect, the gameplay, is slick – on a par with its predecessors' – but at times it's difficult to stop yourself thinking 'there's no reason why this game should look and sound so... 8-bit!' Maybe Epyx will come up with a truly 16-bit 'Games' package next time.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	41%
SOUND	52%
PLAYABILITY	76%
VALUE	68%

OVERALL 71%

ST

You'll probably still be shivering when this one arrives as it's due out sometime in early March at the latest. Timing apart, the ST games are likely to be exactly the same in most aspects: namely graphics, sound, playability and even price.

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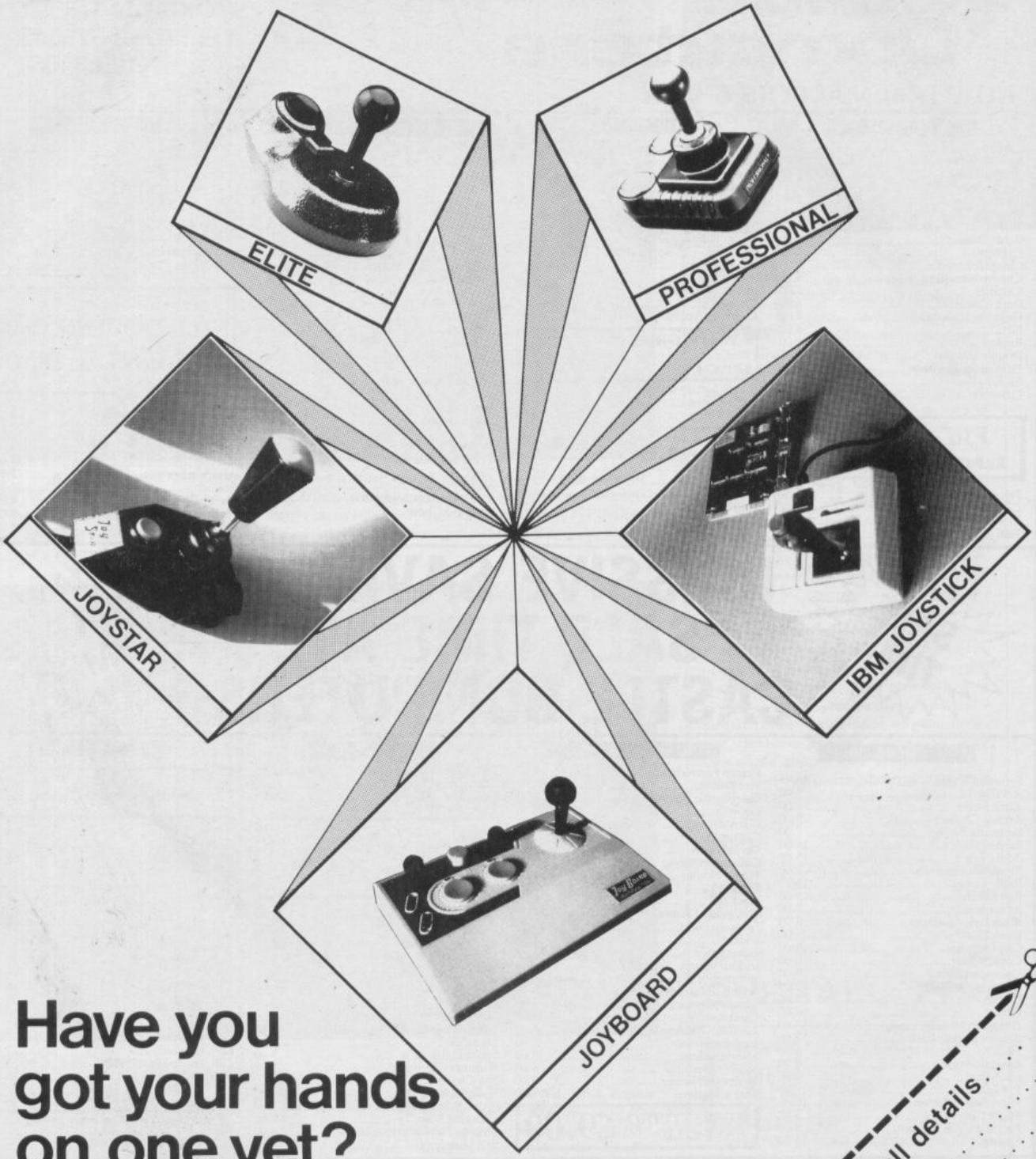

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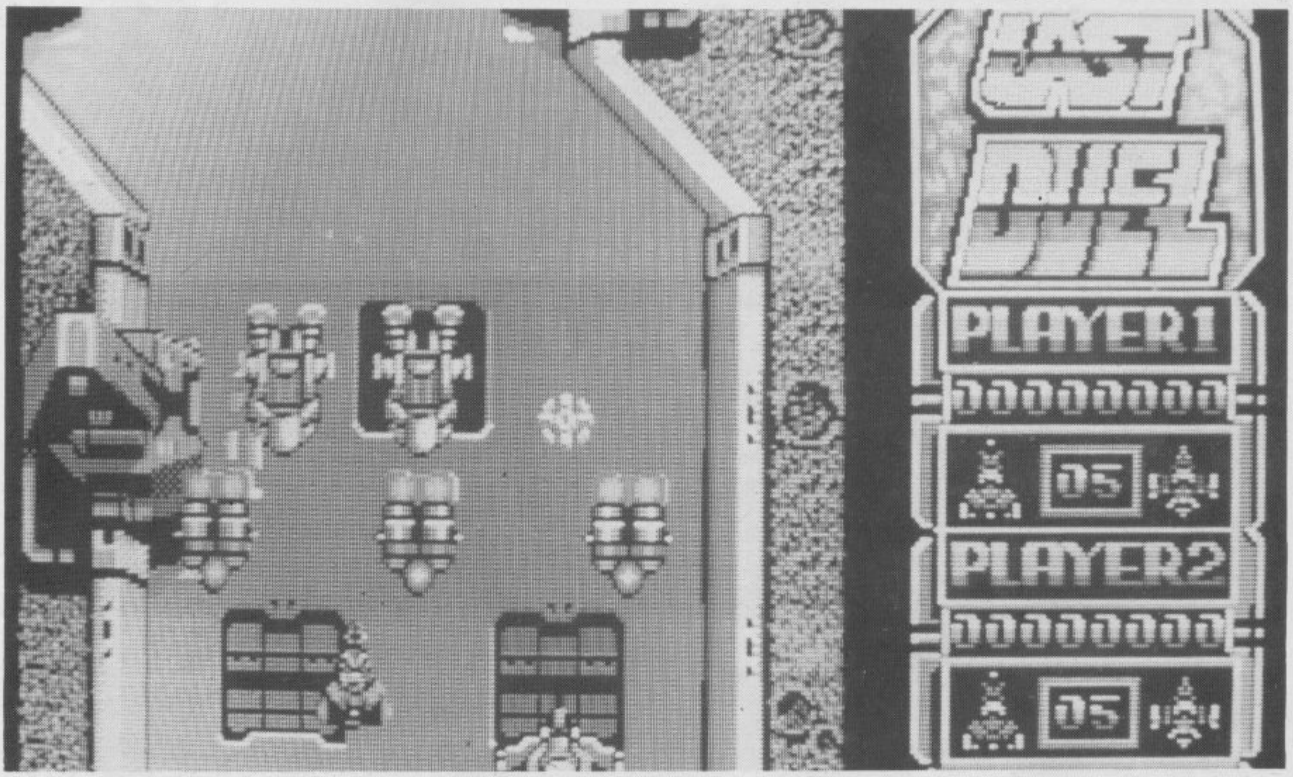
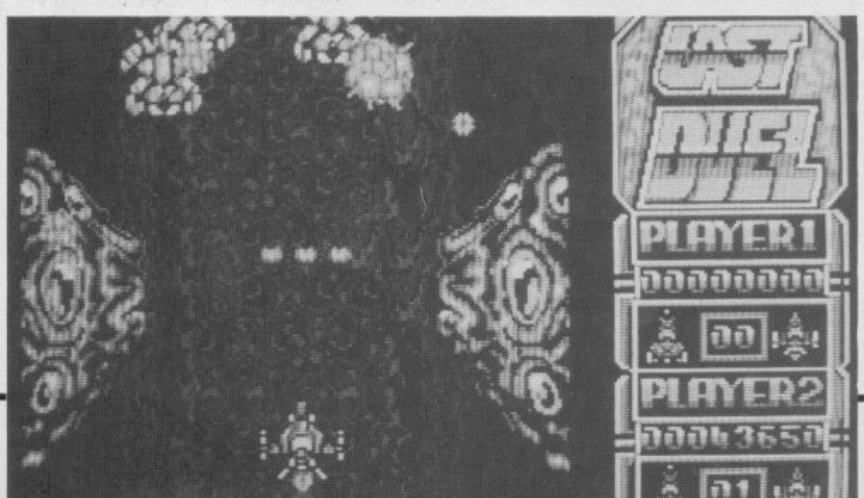
Last Duel



Gary Whitta rushes into Go!'s latest vertically scrolling venture to find out if there is life after Xenon.

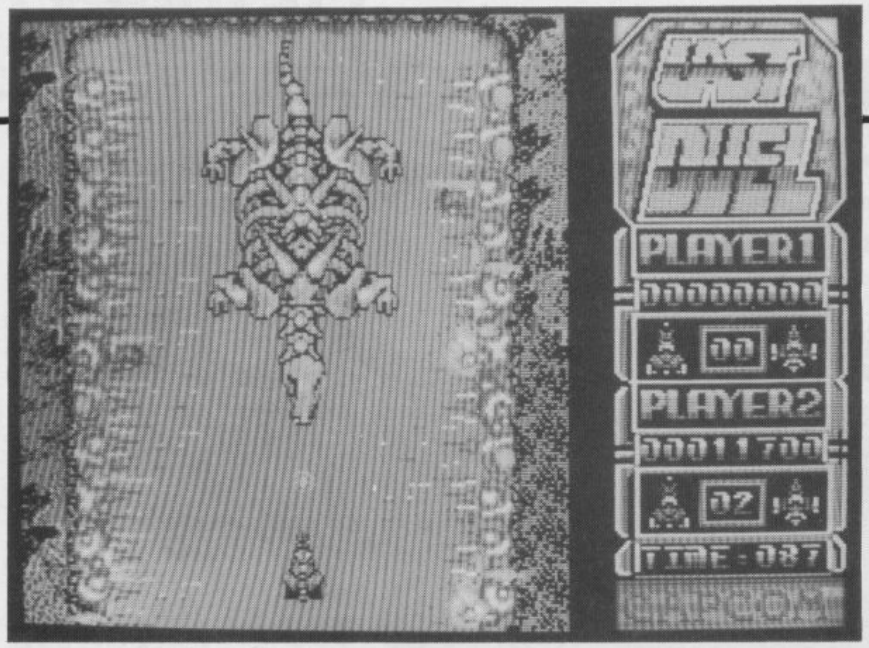
The six levels are divided between three ground-based environments – where the player takes a tank through perilous catwalks and driveways – and three aerial, that are more in the Xenon mould. In two player mode each pilots a different craft, effectively doubling the available firepower (unfortunately the enemy also tends to send out twice as many nasties).



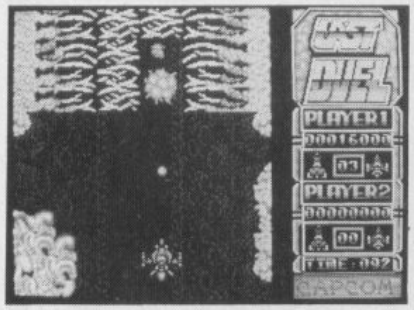
The first level features hazardous holes which must either be avoided or leapt over with a nifty vertical thrust manoeuvre.

As far as vertically-scrolling progressive shoot 'em ups go, The Bitmap Brothers' **Xenon** is arguably the standard by which others are judged. Perhaps that's why after its appearance early last year, the deluge of vertical scrollers stopped suddenly as programmers must have thought to themselves 'we can't top that'. Go!'s **Last Duel** is one of the first of the type to attempt to pose a real challenge.

Subtitled 'Inter Planet War 2012', the plot revolves loosely around two rival planets, one of whom has had its Queen, Sheeta, kidnapped by the other. After being bungled into a state of the art fighter ship, you're sent off to the warmongering planet to get her back.

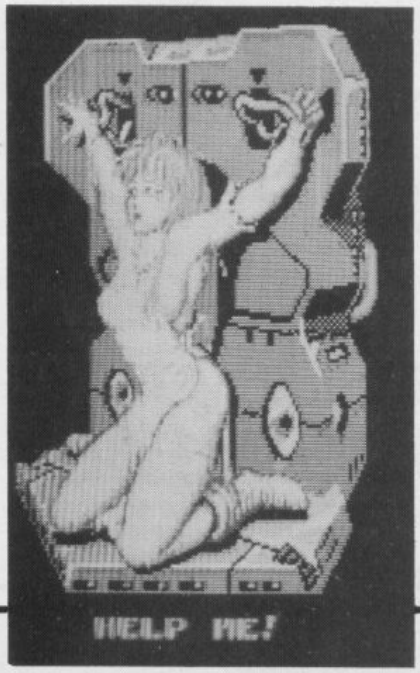


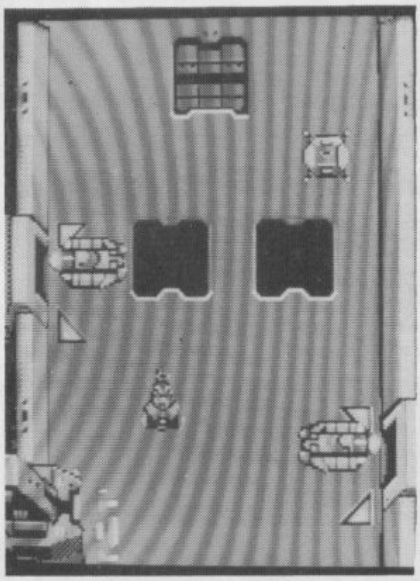
Just one of the mean'n'moody end-of-level guardians. Like most games of this type, defeating the bad guy is a matter of repeatedly pounding him with laser fire until it can take no more. This is unfortunately not quite as impressive a sight as it could have been.



Blasting through the bio-mechanical Level Four, where the snake-like nasties that appear from slime-ridden orifices in the cavern walls bear an uncanny resemblance to those seen in the vertical sections in Konami's Salamander. Either knock out the nasties as they appear, or aim directly at the generators themselves and put an end to their alien producing days.

"Save me!" The voluptuous Queen Sheeta appears at the beginning of the game (and also between levels), flashing her legs and fluttering her eyes to egg you on through the game.





Fed up with your puny single laser? Then knock out the flying satellites for some handy lettered power-ups. There's a different set of weapons for both types of craft, and including a natty crosshair sight, three way firing and side lasers.

AMIGA

Last Duel isn't a bad attempt at a shoot 'em up. Tiertex has done a good job of converting a none-too-impressive coin-op, but the gameplay suffers due to a few faults. Firstly the collision detection isn't very accurate, causing the player to tumble through a hole in the road without good reason. More importantly, the gameplay is very slow (even on the later levels) and there's never any really frantic action. The simultaneous two-player option doesn't help matters as the small playing area makes things very cluttered. On the plus side there's an atmospheric theme tune and bouncy in-game jingles that add to the game, but not enough to redeem it. If you've already got Xenon or Sidewinder you'll be used to classier shoot 'em ups than this by now.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	February
GRAPHICS	60%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	58%
VALUE	52%

OVERALL 61%

ST

The gameplay here is exactly the same as the Amiga's, although it does seem to move at a slightly faster pace. The sound, however, is weak, with the Amiga's atmospheric music notable by its absence.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	February
GRAPHICS	63%
SOUND	54%
PLAYABILITY	61%
VALUE	52%

OVERALL 60%

PC

Tiertex is currently beavering away, and should have this on the shelves shortly after the ST and Amiga versions.

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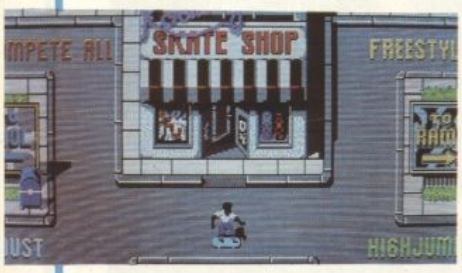
Skate



Radical Dude Gary Whitta pads up and skates for his life in Electronic Arts' totally bio boardwalk.

Before you go skating, you'd better pay a visit to Rodney's skate shop, the mecca of the skateboarding world. It's all here, high scores, new boards, the competition roster (you need to sign on before you can compete properly) and skating advice from Rodney himself.

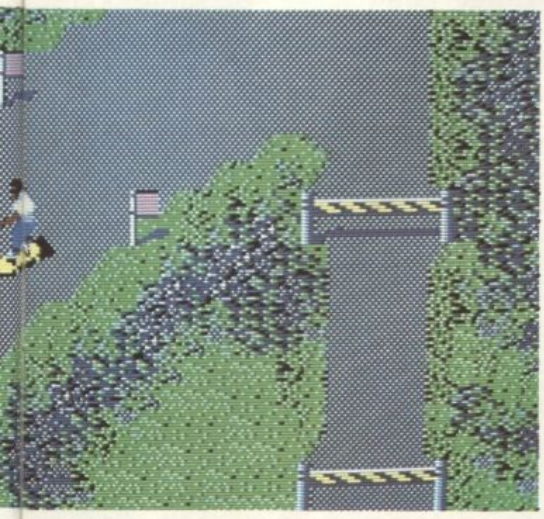
Or D

Go skate or go home. That's the message to all potential competitors in the annual **Skate Or Die** tournament. There's no room for cowards or snivellers here. Four of the most gruelling events in skateboarding, some real and some imaginary, await those with nerves of steel and compound wheels.

Rodney the organiser (and father of Lester, the **Skate Or Die** trophy holder) will give you advice on tactics and strategy, but after that you're on your own.

The second head-to-head event, this time played against Lester, the meanest dude ever to set foot on a board. The raceway is an urban obstacle course of back alleys, gardens, garages and sidewalks. Again, time is of the essence as the fastest time wins the game, but there are bonus points along the way for running over cola cans, invading back gardens and leaping over speed ramps. And if your opponent looks like he might be getting ahead of you, why not kick or punch him off his board (points are awarded for that too).

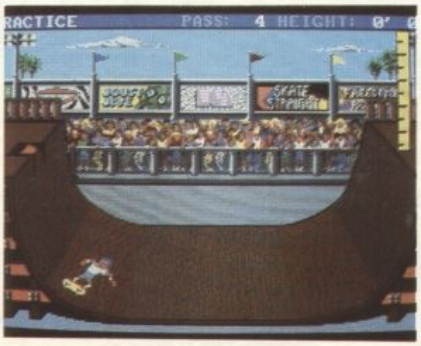
Described as a 'rad new twist on the game of tag', the treacherous joust puts two rival skaters head to head in an empty swimming pool that serves as the arena for the event. Both skaters, initially placed directly opposite one another roll back and forth across the pool. As they pass, the skater armed with the oar-like 'boffing stick' attempts to knock his opponent from his board while the other tries to stay safely out of range. The 'hitter' is allowed five passes to nobble his opponent, after which the boffer is swapped and the hunter becomes the hunted. First to score five hits wins, and when two evenly matched players meet, the game can go on and on and on . . .



Nothing too taxing here, just a relaxing race against the clock over a series of ramps, tunnels and bridges towards a finishing line that resembles the ramp practice from Atari's 720°. Forks in the road allow the skater to choose his route (either roll down the easy way or tackle the dangerous pipes and ramps for bonuses).

Same ramp, different event. This time height is all that matters, and pulling off jumps is achieved by the age-old frantic joystick-waggling or key-tapping technique (last seen in Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge). You've got five attempts in all, three of which really need to be used to build up enough power to really show off in the final two. Anything over six feet is acceptable, and if you're really good you may be able to avoid crashing right through the ramp on your final jump (nasty).

Die



The event that sorts the men from the boys. The menacing U-shaped half-pipe. Begin by skating from side to side and building up power by bending your legs in the 'pump zones' (the corners of the ramp) until you gain enough height to execute a trick. Try your hand at Kick-turns, Rail Slides, Ollies, Hand and Footplants and the awesome Aerial. Pulling the trick off is one thing, but landing back on the ramp with the board under your feet is another. Ten passes at each end of the ramp are allowed, with points awarded for the best executed tricks – the almost impossible 720 degree aerial spin rakes in the most.

PC

Skate Or Die is one of the most remarkable PC games for quite a while. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the Epyx 'Games' series (perhaps due to the contribution of Stephen Ladrum, a one-time Epyx programmer) and is every bit as fun to play. Each event is well presented and executed: the two-player events, Pool Joust and Downhill Jam, work brilliantly when played with a friend. The control mode takes a little while getting used to, but an alternative is provided in case you find the standard method too difficult. If Skate Or Die has one weak point, it's sound. PC sound is rarely up to much, and the programmers haven't helped by composing several irritating scores (ironic considering Ron Hubbard wrote the C64 originals). Fortunately there's a sound toggle and the game actually plays a lot better in silence. A pleasantly playable package providing plenty of punch.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	75%
SOUND	44%
PLAYABILITY	73%
VALUE	69%

OVERALL 72%

ST

Egad! This version of Skate Or Die won't be hitting the streets until early Summer! Fortunately great things are promised and so it could well be worth the wait and the £24.95 asking price.

A

The release of the Amiga version is set to coincide with that of the ST, sometime around June, and at the same price.

Commodore Amiga

The Knight one of three character classes.

Atari ST

Converse through simple commands and menus.

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Discover Times Of Lore, Origin's first adventure on cassette. Acclaimed British designer Chris Roberts has taken the best of arcade and adventure – fast and furious combat, stunning graphics and animation, unrelenting danger and challenge – and introduced the depth of a classic fantasy role playing game.

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Origin have broken new ground in Times Of Lore. Isn't it time you did too? Available for: C64/128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Spectrum 48/128K Cassette £9.95, Spectrum +3 Disk £14.95, Amstrad 464/6128 Cassette £9.95, Disk £14.95, Atari ST £24.95, IBM/PC & Compatibles £24.95, Apple £19.95, Commodore Amiga £24.95.

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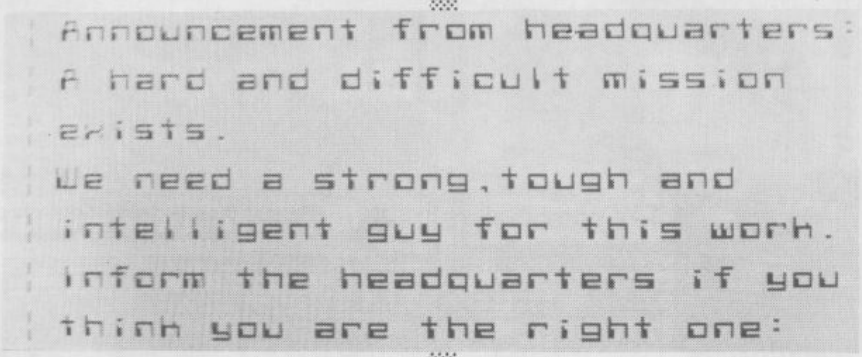
Mission Elevator

Going up! Axxiom's Mission Elevator has all the classic ingredients of a computer game and more. But as Graham Taylor discovers, classic ingredients don't automatically mean a classic game . . .

Things begin badly . . . the name, **Mission Elevator**, doesn't sound like the name of a great game. It sounds more like a bad translation, which in fact it is . . . and the bad translating gets even worse (better?) with the exciting introductory screen. Check this out: "Announcement from Headquarters: A hard and difficult mission exists." Oh yeah? Any difficult mission I know.

It's easy to make milage out of foreign software houses not speaking English, and it wouldn't be fair in this case were it not for the fact that it's symptomatic of a certain lack of effort in converting the game for the English market.

The concept is either 'classic' or 'mouldy', depending on your point of view. You play a detective trying to gain clues and keys which will allow him to find his way through a series of apartment blocks. Each block consists of several floors connected by lifts in a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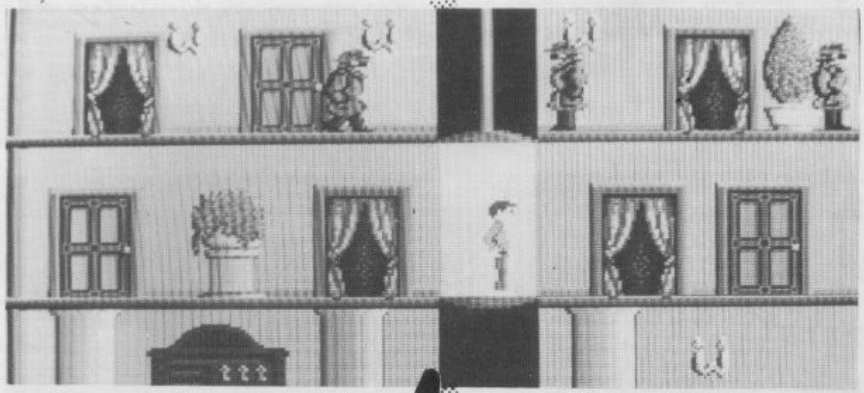
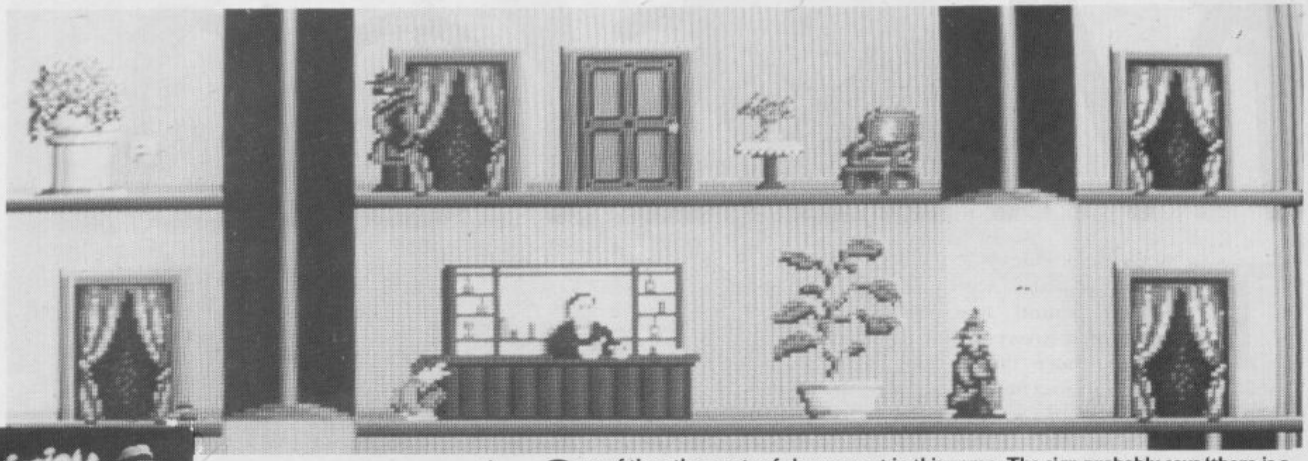
Inform the headquarters if you
think you are the right one:

▲ Things badly are starting. There is an intro. Peculiar English it is (I tried telling headquarters that I wasn't the right guy for the mission but they didn't seem interested).

▼ The little guy is you (nice pullover don't you think). Lifts take you from level to level. Bottom left is the reception area where, in one of the most challenging of the game's many puzzles you have to see if there is a key. Guess what . . .



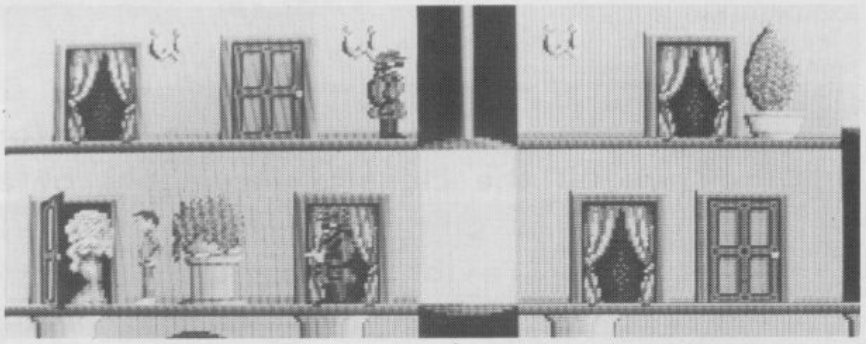


One of the other sorts of clue you get in this game. The sign probably says 'there is a key in reception' (joke). Watch out for the detective who has just arrived by lift and wants to blow you away.

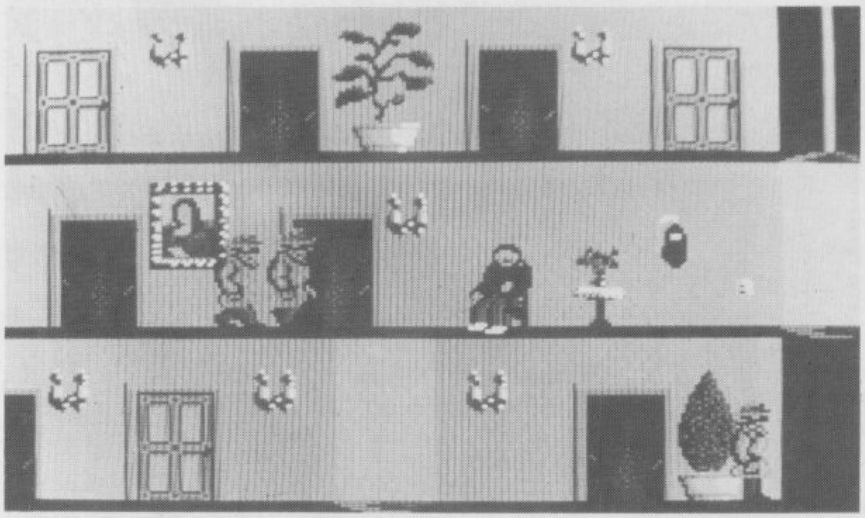
not-always-obvious fashion. Each floor is patrolled by raincoated detectives who open fire almost the moment you come into range.

Pretty fast reactions are vital, for, if detectives arrive on your current level (and they wander around up and down the lifts just like you) you better either kill them or duck . . . you don't get a chance to think twice.

The game's puzzle aspect is pretty limited, and because of the graphic simplicity it's often difficult to tell what's supposed to be a 'meaningful' location (i.e. might have a clue) and what's just a bit of passing scenery.



Behind some doors there is nothing, while others reveal voluptuous women with big secrets (and extraordinarily long noses).



Examining chairs almost always leads to resting in them. This can become surprisingly tedious, particularly when two detectives are heading your way. Still, that portrait is probably worth looking at. . .

AMIGA

Take a look at the screenshots. Is there anything stopping this game from being on the Commodore 64? The sound effects are a bit better, but they don't stop the overall presentation of the game being mostly disappointing. At least it moves along at a fair pace. For the first five minutes it can seem almost exciting, but really it's a simple and very ancient idea with nothing added to keep the interest.

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SOUND	52%
PLAYABILITY	50%
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ST

Exactly the same as the above, except that it doesn't even have the good sound effects to redeem it.

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TIPS

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Ocean

The correct shoes to wear for optimum Daleypower in all the events are...

Training	Training Shoes
100m	Running Spikes
Long Jump	Long Spikes
High Jump	Flat Soles
Hurdles	Short Spikes
Discus	Half Spikes
Pole Valut	Track Shoes

And if you've got an autofire joystick, you can use it to good advantage in the Long Jump. Engage the autofire before starting your approach, and when you reach the bar you automatically jump at the perfect time. Thanks to R and A Simpson from Edmonton.

ARKANOID: REVENGE OF DOH

Imagine

Owners of the newly-released Amiga version can hold down the left mouse button while the game is loading to reveal the title screen from Ocean's forthcoming RoboCop. Why? Is the bear a Catholic?

THUNDERBLADE

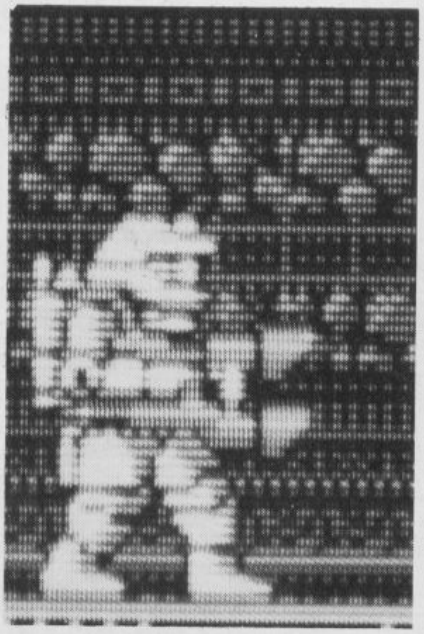
US Gold

When on the title screen type in CRASH, causing the screen to flash quickly, indicating that the cheat mode is active. Now just press UNDO (ST) or DEL (Amiga) while playing to advance to the next level.

AFTERBURNER

Activision

During play, hit BACKSPACE to pause the game and type in AGES (Sega backwards), causing the game to restart. Now when you play again, use the <and > keys to change levels.



EXOLON

Hewson

Type 'ad astra' (in lower case) while on the high score table – and lo, infinite lives are yours. Thanks to author Martin Gysh for that one.

THRUST

Firebird

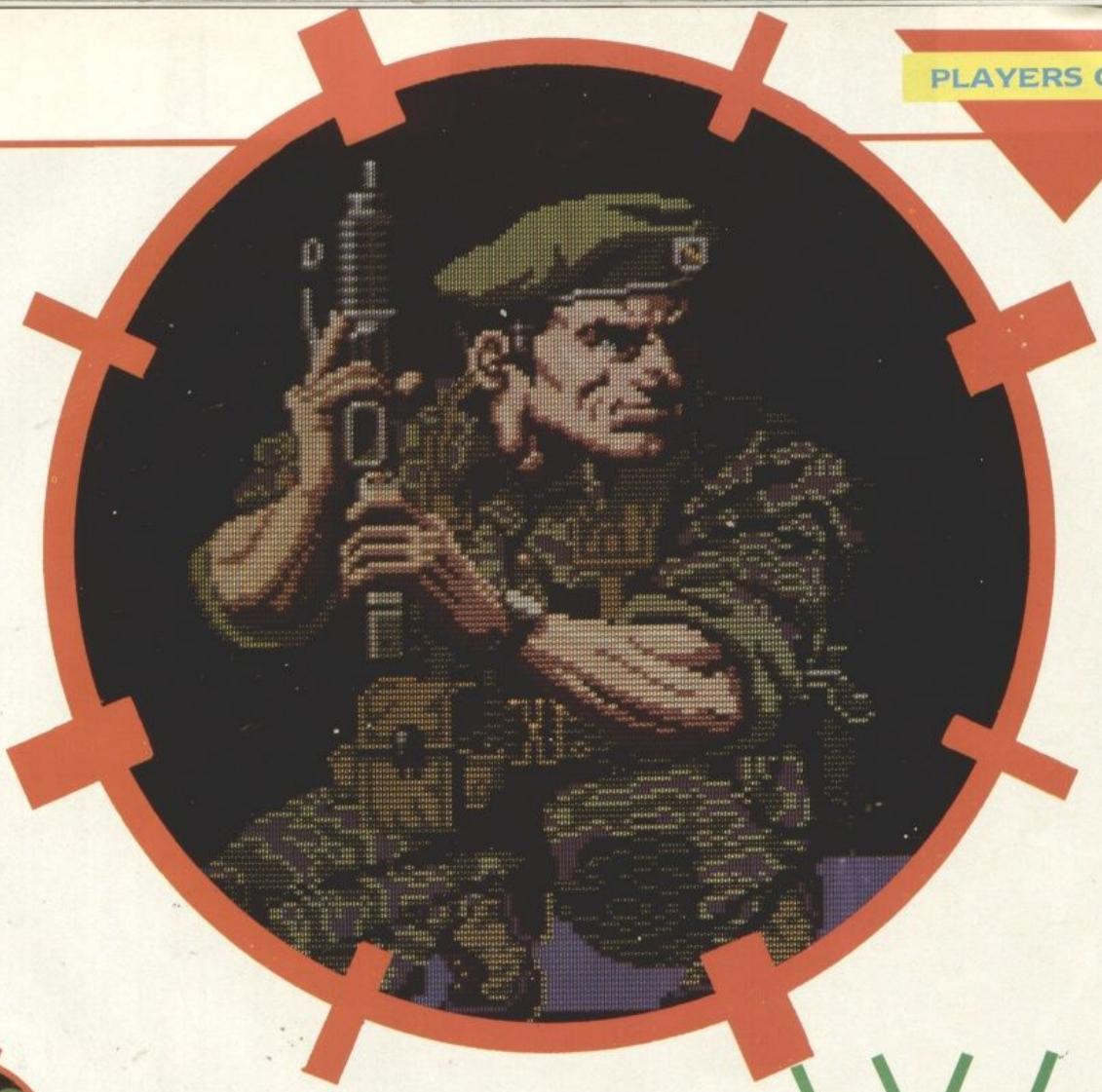
Marcus Mansukhani of Ipswich has discovered that if you boot the GEM desktop, open the THRUST disk icon and double click on the CHEAT.PRG icon, you can then type CHEAT during the game, allowing you to survive any collisions. Unfortunately you can still die by running out of fuel and getting caught in a nuclear explosion. Well, you can't have everything.

ELITE

Firebird

Following the cheat for the ST version we printed back in Issue Three, Andrew McGarrigle from Mexborough in South Yorkshire has provided the Amiga equivalent. As before, when asked for the security codeword type SARA. Now enter the real codeword from the manual when asked again, then press the '*' key to access the hacker screen. The new amended codes are...

CHANGE BYTE	KEY VALUE	FOR
21	01-04	Missiles
23	02	Large Cargo Bay
24	01	ECM System
32	01	Docking Computer
23	01	Beam Laser
26	01	Pulse Laser
2C	01	Escape Capsule
3C	01	ECM Jammer
2F	01	Energy Bomb
3F	01	Cloaking Device
34	01	Galactic Hyperdrive
38	01	Military Lasers
36	01	Mining Lasers
40	01	Food
47	01	Textiles
49	01	Radiactives
4C	01	Slaves
50	01	Liquor/Wines
54	01	Narcotics
5C	01	Computers
63	01	Machinery
67	01	Alloys
69	01	Firearms
6C	01	Furs
72	01	Minerals
75	01	Gold
79	01	Platinum
83	01	Gemstones
84	01	Alien Items
88	01	Unhappy Refugees
8C	01	Thargoid Documents
90	01	Fugitive
91	01	Offender
97	01-08	Rating (Harmless – Elite)



Operation Wolf

Weary veteran Gary Whitta stops doging bullets long enough to put pen to paper in a bid to help all those struggling Lone Wolves out there.

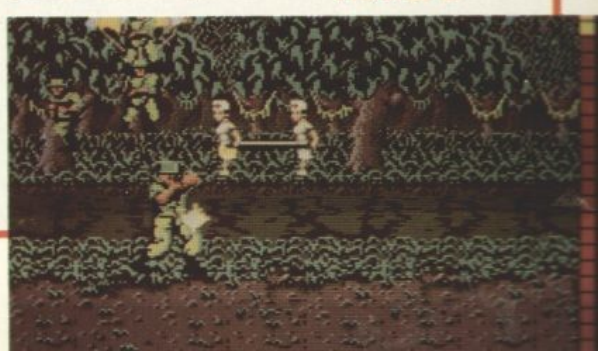
Operation Wolf is not the kind of game that you can be told how to play – you've either got the skill to complete it or you haven't. What can be taught however is the best way to use your goon-wasting talents.

The most important thing to note on every level is that the enemy attack from one of three positions: the background, midground and foreground. The closer they are the more damage points they tend to inflict when they open fire, so get into the habit of knocking out the soldiers up front before hitting those at the back.

STAGE ONE: DEMOLISH COMMS SET-UP

Shoot the packing crates to reveal an extra magazine, rocket bomb, pep drink, the free token or the dynamite. Shooting the farm animals and the passing birds may also yield a useful item, but don't bother if there are soldiers on screen – wait until you get a spare second or so and then go for it.

TROOPS 50
CHOPPERS 4
TANKS 5



STAGE TWO: EXTRACT INFORMATION ABOUT CAMP

As usual, concentrate on what is doing most damage – for example, the incoming knives and grenades and the boats and jeeps. Forget about the guys on the other side of the river and concentrate on the mid and foregrounds.

At the end of the level the General appears with his female hostage. Dither too long here and he shoots you. Misfire and you could hit the civilian, severely damaging your own health. Wait for a couple of seconds until you get a clear shot and fire like mad. About two or three bursts should be enough to finish him off

TROOPS 60
BOATS 8
TANKS 8

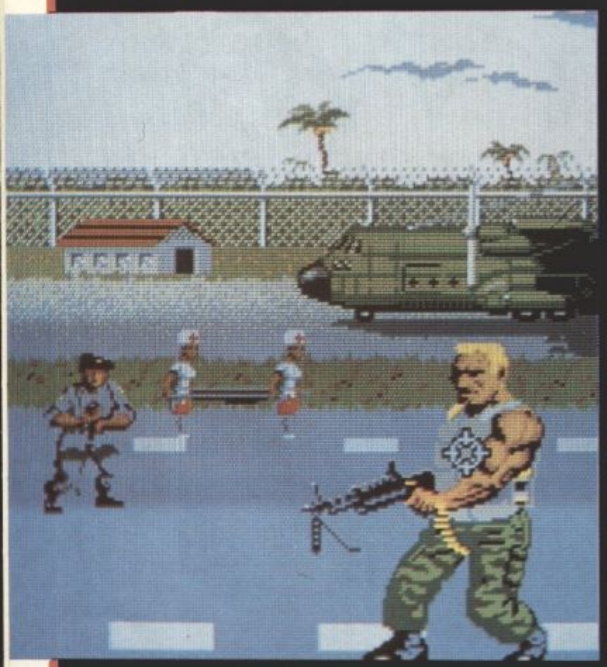
The Arnold Schwarzenegger look-a-like is armed with an M60 machine gun (which, just for the record, is capable of firing 4,550 rounds a minute) and only appears on later levels. He's well padded up with body armour so the only way to put him out of action is a head shot.

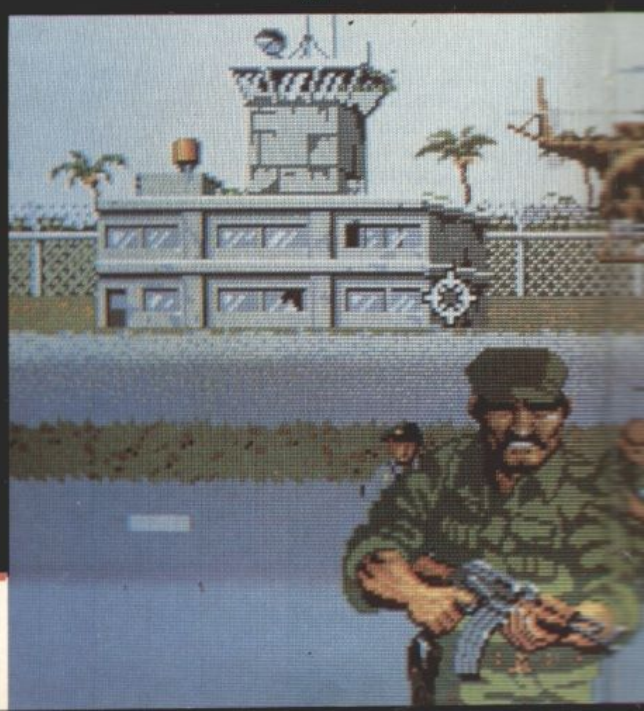
STAGE THREE: WASTE EVERYBODY, TAKE A REST

Probably the easiest level of the lot. Just waste everything you see, but don't be too carefree with your ammo. Try to get through this level without having to use the Continue option so that it's saved for later.

Completing the level results in a nice long rest and a much-welcomed mass-reduction of damage points.

TROOPS 40
CHOPPERS 4
TANKS 3





Paratroopers appear on most levels and can be killed simply by defying the Geneva Convention . . . shoot their parachutes to make them fall to the ground and die.

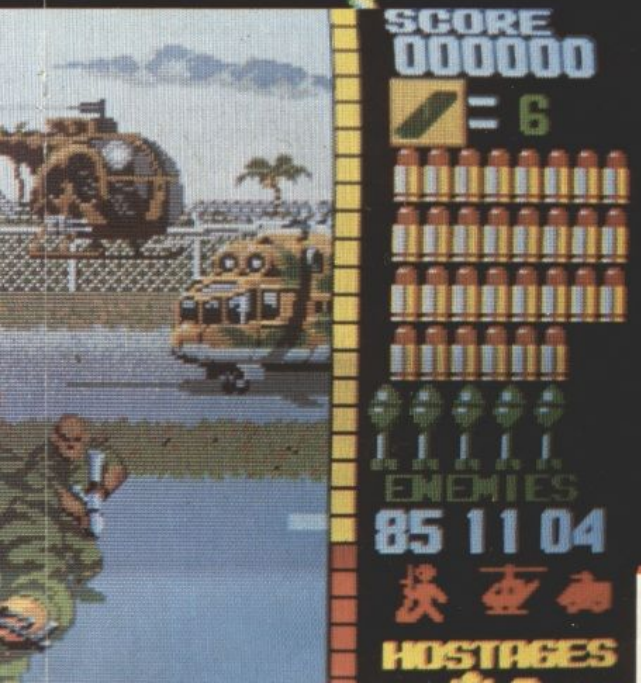
When a bad guy appears right at the front of the screen, forget about everything else (which you're practically forced to do anyway as he obscures a lot of the action) and concentrate on plugging him before he does the same to you. Point blank shots register heavily on the damage meter, so be quick.

STAGE FOUR: RAID POWDER MAGAZINE AND REPLENISH AMMUNITION

Although the briefing at the beginning of the level promises the restocking of your ammo, it doesn't mean that there are more free magazines and rockets lying about: Instead your ammo is restored to capacity upon completion of the level – and this is one level where you're likely to run out completely if you're not careful. Machine-gun the tanks and save all your rockets for the onslaught of seven choppers which attack in succession.

TROOPS 45
CHOPPERS 7
TANKS 5

It's Rambo, complete with headband and sleeveless shirt. He's probably the most difficult guy to hit as he spends most of the time rolling around which makes him almost invulnerable. The time to catch him is when he leaps up to fire at you and slows down.



STAGE SIX: GUIDE HOSTAGES TO SAFETY

The airport section is much the same as the last. Again you have to cover for the hostage and kill the knifer as soon as he appears. The appearance of 10 extra troops and four more tanks makes things a little more difficult this time round though.

Shoot the Black Berets as soon as they appear on screen before they throw a knife in your general direction.

STAGE FIVE: RELEASE HOSTAGES

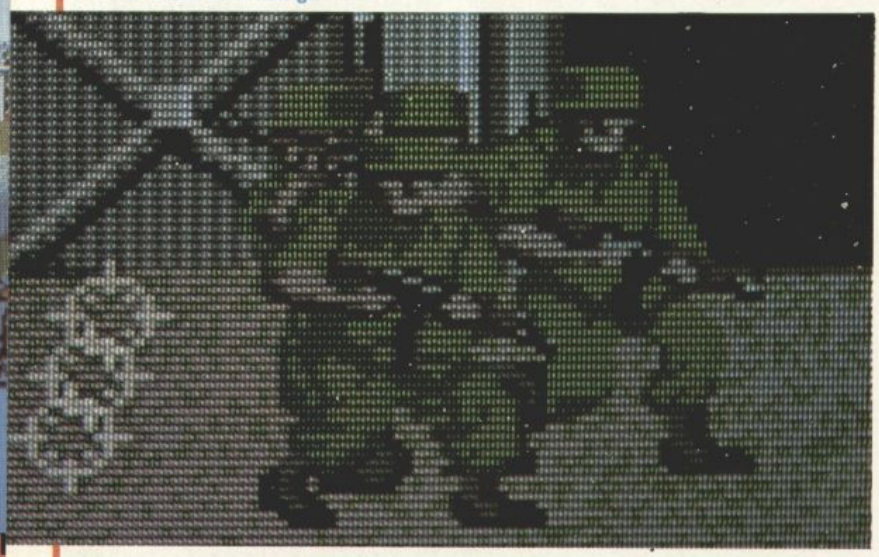
The priority here is to give covering fire to the rag-clad POWs that rush across the screen from right to left hotly pursued by a knifeman. Letting the knifer get to the hostage, or inadvertently killing him yourself, results in huge damage increase, so when a hostage appears, don't think about anything other than getting him off safely. There are five hostages, each appearing at roughly 30-second intervals. An awesome 12 helicopters appear on this level, so grab the chance to pick up as many rocket bombs as you can along the way.

TROOPS 75
CHOPPERS 12
TANKS 0

THE BONUS ROUND

The 'bonus' section that occassionally appears between levels is the only major deviation from its arcade counterpart. Here, instead of a firefight against soldiers and choppers, it's an onslaught of helicopters in waves. The most economic way to destroy them is to fire a rocket bomb between pairs which knocks out both of them. Don't attempt to shoot them down with cannon fire, it takes too long and can seriously damage your health. The bonus magazines and rocket bombs come thick and fast here so be sure to catch as many as you can in between chopper waves.

The enemies you encounter most often during the operation are the 'factory line' stock troops that attack from the back and mid-ground areas. They attack both in groups and singularly, and actually represent a greater threat when alone as they are more difficult to hit. When they appear in a group, sweep across the whole lot in one go.



TROOPS 85
CHOPPERS 11
TANKS 4

STARRAY

Logotron

Following on from last month's Amiga cheat mode, here's the ST version. Type in AL YANKOVIC to activate the cheat mode. Now hit F5 for infinite shields or F6 to complete an attack wave.

THE SENTINEL

Firebird

Some codes for the later levels of Geoff Crammond's surreal masterpiece, courtesy of R Jeffrey of Eltham in London.

LEVEL	CODE
0304	46774653
0734	66919994
1091	81759567
1863	13090835
3301	48423345
3942	17556527
4706	98972516
5391	06895848
6208	65592289
6208	65592289
6712	77956620
7333	70647565
8007	59442559

ELIMINATOR

Hewson

This is one of the most difficult cheat modes to execute, but well worth it if you can pull it off. On the title screen press HELP and type in HANDEL to put you on Stage Nine. Now when playing, avoid the water to the right and crash into the oncoming green alien. On the next life shoot the alien and fall into the water on the right just before reaching the first ramp. On your next life, shoot the green alien, jump over the ramp and stay in the right-hand lane. If all has gone well you should be shot by a bubble-like alien, and you should then, at long last, have activated the infinite lives mode. Thanks to George Cox and Mark Wellar from Canterbury.

RAMBO III

Ocean

Score 5,000 or more to qualify for the high score table and type in RENEGADE, allowing you to press keys 1, 2 or 3 on the title screen to access the level of your choice.

ARKANOID

Discovery

As requested, here's a golden oldie, this time for Discovery Software's Amiga-only arcade conversion. Pause the game with the space bar and type DSIMAGIC. This will restart the game and release a mystery cylinder that you should collect to activate the cheat mode. Now press...

L for lasers
C for a 'catch'
F to confront Doh on the final screen.

FLYING SHARK

Firebird

On the high score table, enter either HSC or KDJ (the initials of the programmers), holding down the '5' key on the keypad as you enter the last letter. HSC gives infinite lives while KDJ awards the player with invulnerability, leaving you free to cruise through the game from beginning to end painlessly.

BOMBUZAL

Image Works

Following last month's taster, here's a whole load of codes to take you right up to level 120 if you so please, thanks to Robert Manners from Northumberland.

CODE	LEVEL
SINK	28
BIKE	36
IRON	40
BIRD	44
LEAD	48
TAPE	52
WEED	56
VASE	60
RING	64
PILL	68
GIRL	72
SPOT	76
PALM	84
OPAL	88
(not OFAL as stated last month!)	
LOCK	92
SONG	96
SAFE	100
FIRE	104
WORM	108
LAMP	112
TREE	120

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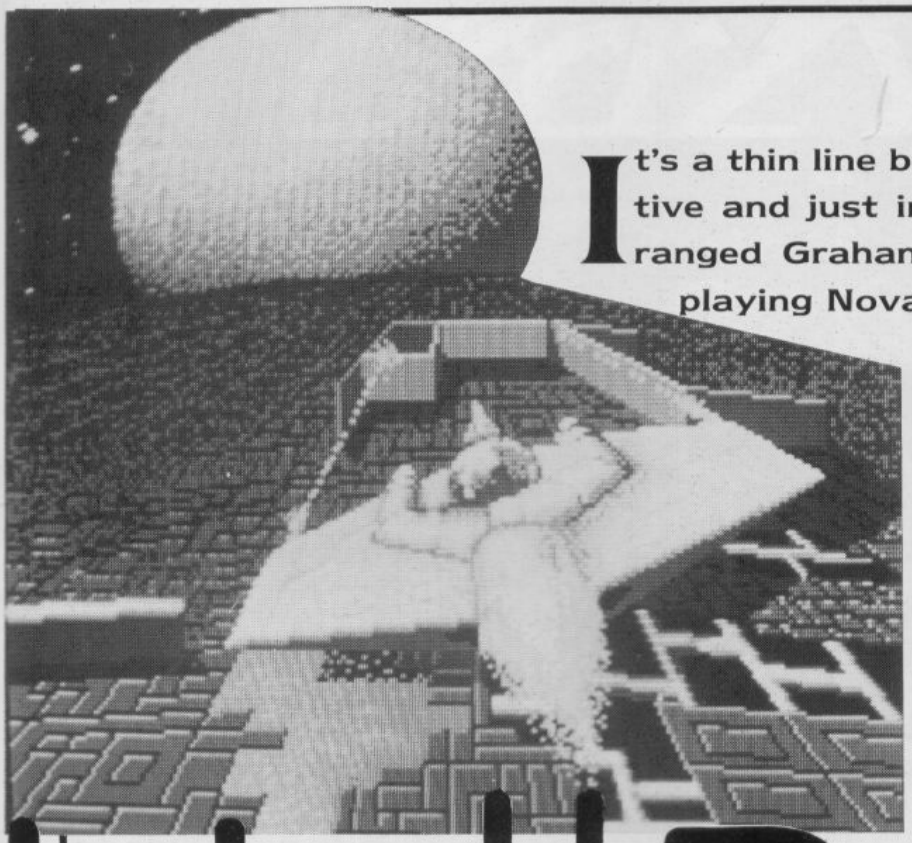
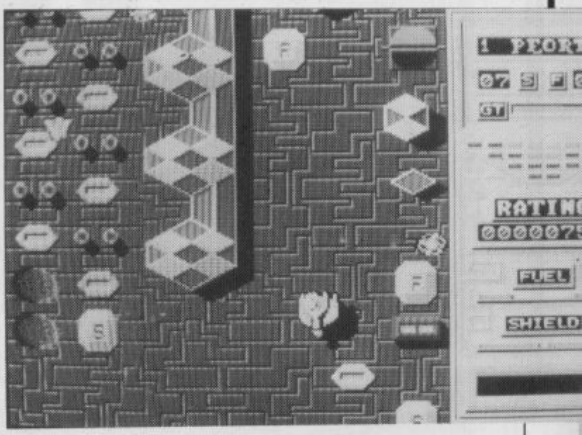
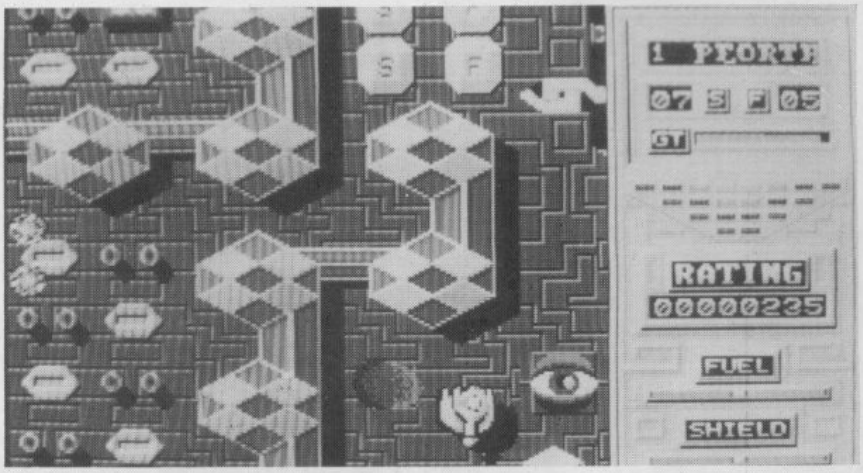


It's a thin line between infuriatingly addictive and just infuriating, as the now deranged Graham Taylor discovered while playing Novagen's latest.



Hell Bent



There are only a few routes through the game. This one of them. Blast the eye quickly and grab all those bonus shots and fuel in the top right hand corner – fuel runs out quickly.

Now I think I'm a pretty average arcade game player. Not a complete dolt, not a beady-eyed whizz kid. Just OK. Let's call me Mr Ordinary. Now I think that if an arcade game is so hard that Mr Ordinary dies within 10 seconds on the first 30 (or was it 300?) times he plays it, well that's a bad thing. There are those who will just say I'm being weedy however . . .

Hell Bent is a surprisingly simple game from Novagen, a company I most associate with complex 3D arcade adventure hybrids. Controlling a spacecraft, you pick up fuel and ammo pods and you dodge or blast things. Simple.

Forget the plot – Novagen effectively has. Instead you get a slightly novel (but not actually original) twist in that

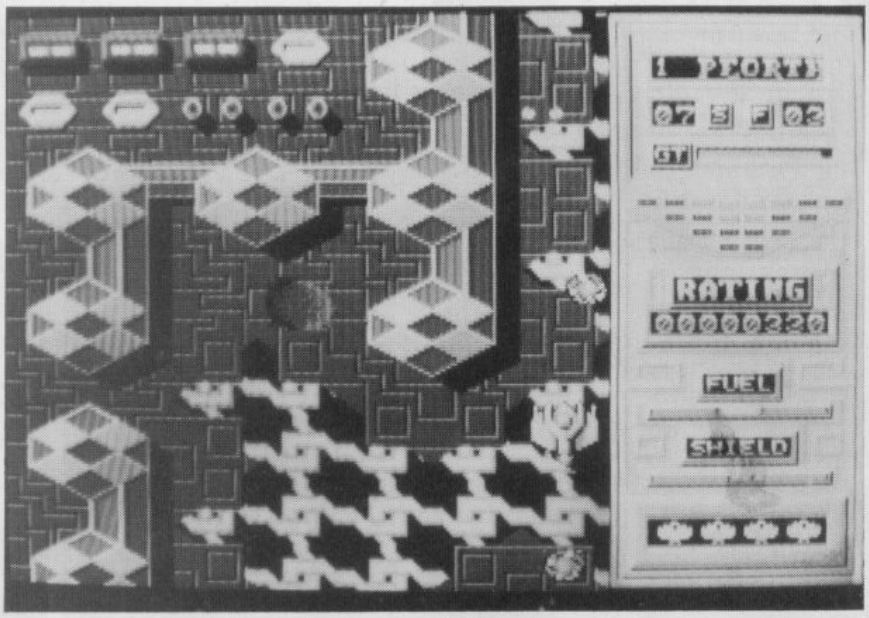
your ship, despite a conventional vertical scroll, top down playing area, can fly left and right, forwards *and backwards.*

Actually it's pretty easy to imagine this game – especially if you've played the likes of **Goldrunner.**

Things start difficult and get worse. Eventually you scrape your way past one set of objects only to find some totally new set of horrors around the corner. In many cases the game has been designed so that there is *only one route* – hardly fair on first timers.

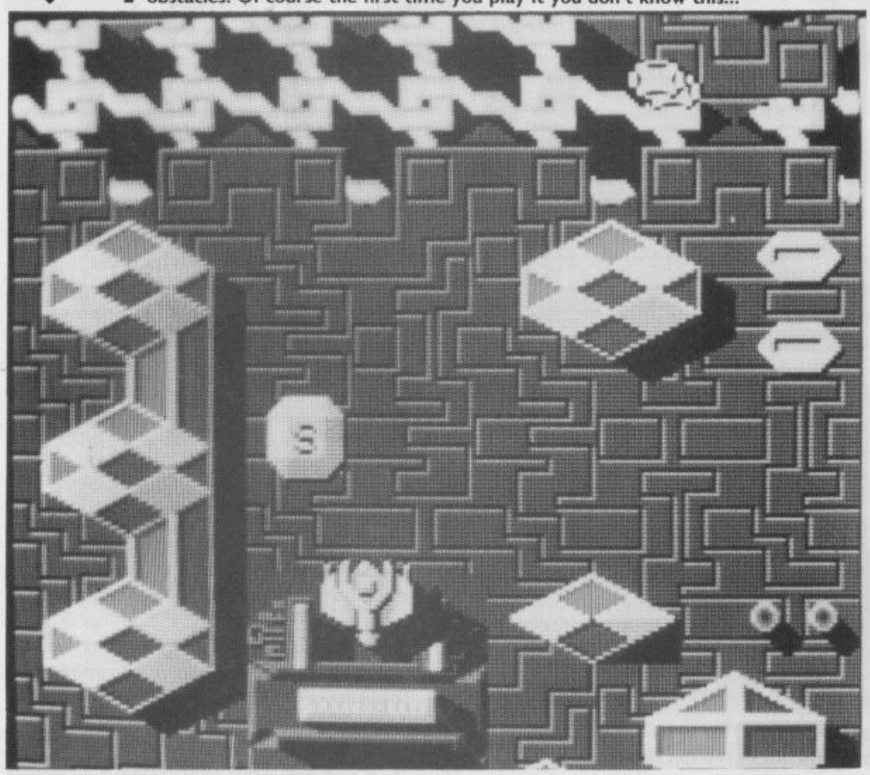
A truly addictive game is one where each new section is just a bit too difficult. You progress slowly, gradually getting a little further. I felt little sense of this in **Hell Bent**, more irritation and frustration.

Of course, within each section losing a life causes you to have to start from the beginning again. My monitor screen was within an inch of its life at a number of points . . .



Watch out for the strange cloud of black things with twisty lines in it! It means you won't be able to see when you bump into the obstacles which you didn't know were there in the first place...

The opening section. After picking up that bonus, hard left to get past the first line of obstacles. Of course the first time you play it you don't know this...



ST

Graphically, Hell Bent is no more than fair, the background landscape is pretty dull, with rather simple shapes representing ground details and no 'set piece' sections to keep the visual interest. The joystick response is also a little peculiar, the idea is that you accelerate as you push the joystick up or down, which causes the spaceship to shift from around 30mph to about 3,000 in less than a second. Great performance in a spaceship maybe, but bloody annoying in a game. Even the sound is indistinguished. The effects are fair enough, but the tune is dull and irritating. As some sort of insane test of skill among Grade A joystick junkies this game might have a future. But for ordinary mortals . . .

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	54%
SOUND	33%
PLAYABILITY	39%
VALUE	38%

OVERALL 43%

A

Same comments apply in most respects. As usual, the sound is better, but that doesn't change things much.

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SCREENSHOTS FROM AMIGA VERSION

Night Hu

Undead but not forgotten, once again Dracula rises from the grave, this time for French software house Ubi Soft. Paul Boughton, promising not to use any vampire puns, is out for the count...

The popular image of Dracula – that of a cloaked Transylvanian Count with a deathly white face, razor-sharp fangs and resplendent in evening wear – has been cemented by more than 100 films.

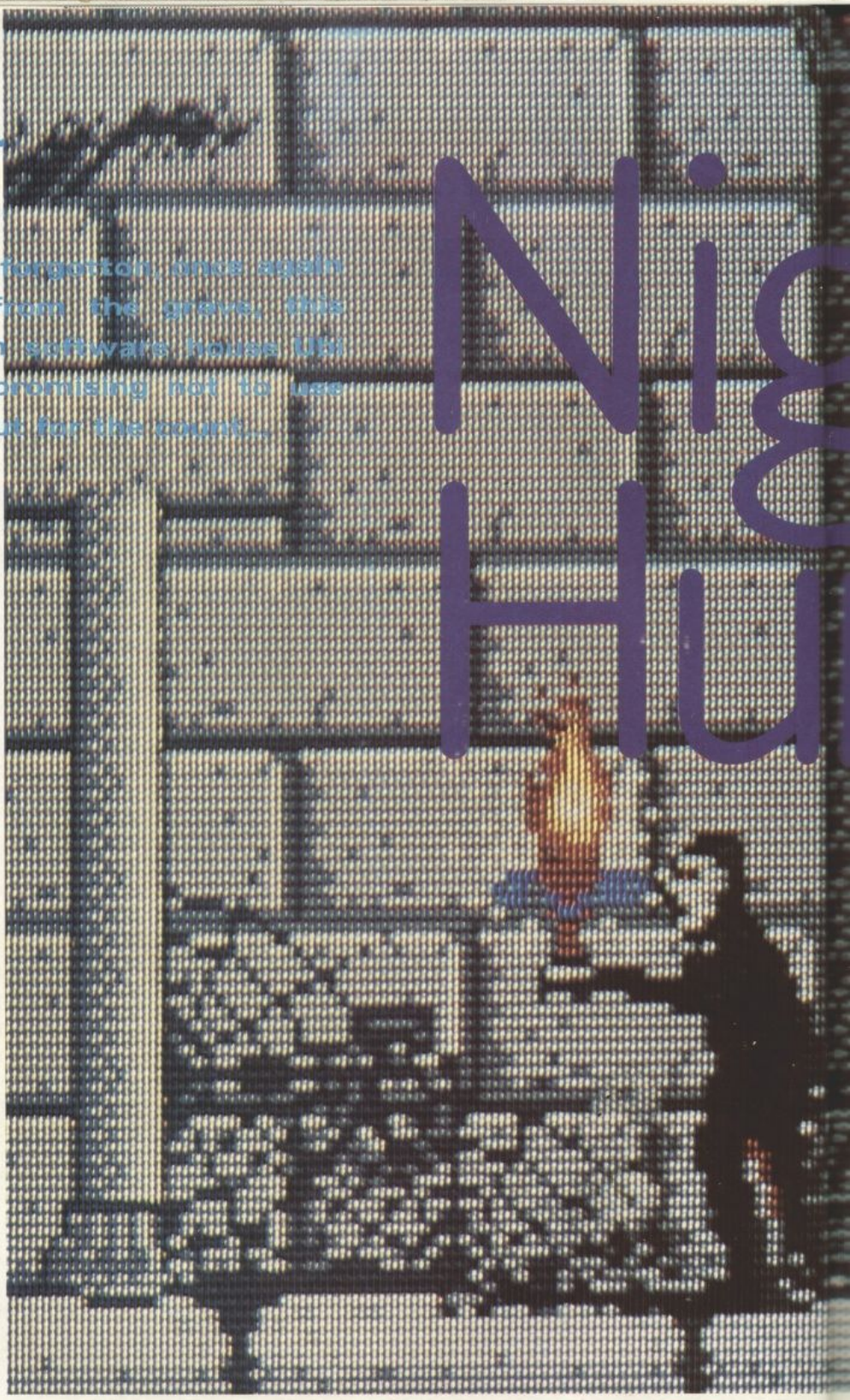
This Dracula owes his existence to an Irish actor-manager called Abraham Stoker, otherwise known as Bram Stoker, who in 1897 published *Dracula*, the book which launched the bloodthirsty count on the British public.

But the real origins of Dracula are far older, far more sinister, far more frightening and far more bloody.

The true Dracula is thought to be a Transylvanian prince called Vlad Dracula, born in the 1430s. He was later to be called Vlad the Impaler. Transylvania, despite what many people think, is not a fictitious area. It is now part of Rumania, but when Vlad was born it was a Hungarian principality. Vlad was a monster in human form, glorifying in killing and torture (his favourite method was to impale his victims on wooden stakes). It's said he even sat and ate meals watching them die.

Stoker took the name of Dracula and mixed it with age-old tales of blood-sucking demons of the night – vampires – and the result was one of fiction's most enduring characters.

Ubi Soft's game plot doesn't attempt to break any new ground. Once again the Prince of Darkness has risen and a curse has fallen across the land. Holy medallions have kept the balance between good and evil, but the nefarious Count plans to tip the balance in favour of the powers of evil by stealing these religious tokens. A band of anti-



Dracula moves through the screens, climbing staircases, exploring rooms – if he finds the right keys. All the time his pursuers punch him, attack him with axes and puncture him with arrows. There are also broomstick-riding witches out for his blood.

The layout of the instrument panel is clear and uncluttered, recording current score and high score, energy level, transformation power level, number of lives and objects picked up. The information to really concentrate on is energy level and transformation power – both of which are replenished by drinking blood. Should the situation prove awkward, the Count can change form to either a bat or a werewolf – the length of this conversion being decided by the transformation power level.

ght nter

Dracula replenishes his energy by 'necking' with his hunters – to a background of satisfied slurping sounds. Once drained the Count's victim becomes a skeleton and disintegrates into a pile of bones.

While a werewolf, Dracula cannot pick up objects or enter houses – but at least he can thump his hunters.

Keys and parchments are found in different locations from game to game, presenting a new challenge at each attempt.

Dracula works best in 'Batman' mode, moving from screen to screen quickly and dodging his enemies. However change back into a vampire over water, you'll drown. The coming of dawn is also potentially fatal to the exploring vampire.

vampire hunters has been formed and traps set to catch the Count.

The most novel twist in **Night Hunter** is that you play Dracula himself. The stalking action takes place across 30 levels, each with 20 screens to explore. To complete a level, Dracula collects five keys and three parchments. With these in his possession he can find a magic door which allows his evil to spread to the next level. Every five levels a medallion replaces the magic door.

Everything about the graveyard scene shrieks of care and attention. The classy and atmospheric backgrounds are nicely rounded off by neat little touches such as flying bats, rats running about and leaping frogs.

ST

Night Hunter is one of the most satisfying uses I've found for my ST. Okay, the idea of vampire games has been done to death, but this one is fresh, exciting, entertaining and very addictive. It took ages to complete the first level but not once did boredom set in. Frustration yes. Boredom no. It's a classy game in all departments: the sound, graphics and playability are all equally impressive.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	85%

OVERALL 82%

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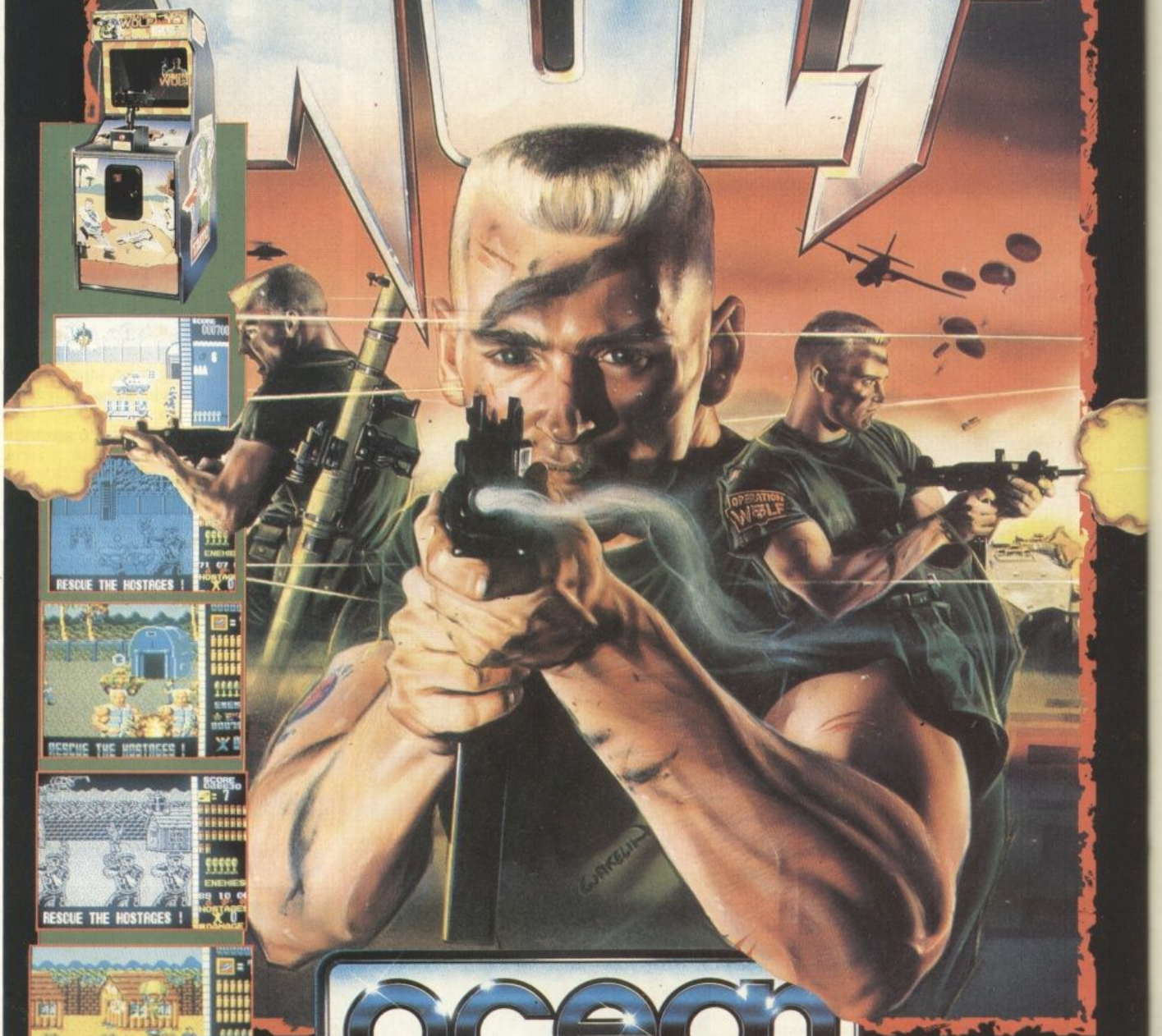

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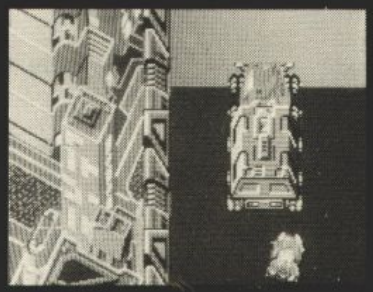
LED Storm

Death Race 2000 meets the Cannonball Run in US Gold's conversion of Capcom's scrolling coin-op. Brian 'furry dice' Nesbitt puts his pedal to the metal.

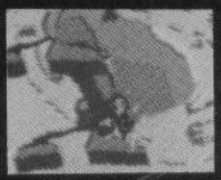


A break from the vertigo-inducing raceways of capital city in the second section, a serene forest city. At least that's what it seems to be until the sheer cliff faces, palm trees and tyre-bursting rocks appear!

With sports cars getting quicker all the time, it won't be too long before they become so fast that to drive them on the road would be suicidal. So what will we do when we have such speed? Design and build 'speedways' specifically for the purpose of racing for kicks? We will if the plot to LED Storm is anything to go by.

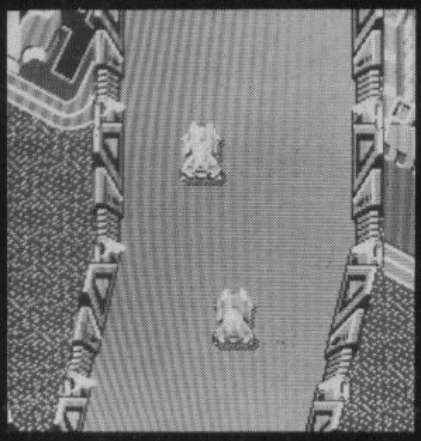
Similar in some ways to Sega's ageing Spy Hunter, LED Storm is a vertically-scroiling futuristic stock-car game. The rules couldn't be simpler; travel a set distance before you run

REVIEW



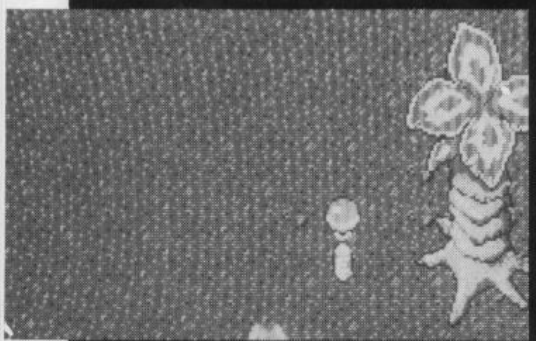
out of energy. Otherwise there are no holds barred.

There are nine terrains to complete in a set order. Strictly speaking it isn't actually a race, as it doesn't matter where you finish in relation to the other cars on the road – your only real opponent is yourself.



The other cars are a real pain, especially the blue one that acts like the 'Jammer' from the old TCR racing sets. Once in front it senses your movements and changes lanes accordingly, making it extremely difficult to pass. If you're smart you can dummy it and send it the wrong way, but far more fun is to hit the fire button while directly behind it, which gives a vertical thrust, sending your car leaping into the air and (hopefully) down on top of the Jammer, knocking it out of the race.

Energy is effectively time, and to keep it stocked up you need to keep running over the fuel tanks that appear in the road. The only trouble is, the game's so fast, that by the time you realise there's some extra fuel on the screen you've already driven past it!



The perilously large break in the road comes without any warning apart from two 'living' crash barriers that signal you frantically to stop. Pay no attention, just break straight through them and leap over the ramp (but don't look down).

Inadvertently drive off the side of the road and thanks to your friendly insurance company, a shiny new car is deposited onto the track by a hovercarrier. This is steered left and right to determine where the car is dropped, but be quick about it as time waits for no man.

ST

In case you were wondering, LED stands for Lazer Enhanced Destruction, and the only problem with LED Storm is the lack of just that – any real shooting action *a la* Spy Hunter. It's more of a straight race game with novel twists than a RoadBlasters-type mix of the two genres. Nevertheless, it's fun to play, mostly due to the sheer breakneck speed. The ST doesn't have much of reputation when it comes to high speed scrolling, but here everything moves at an astonishing pace . . . and fairly smoothly too. The ramps, frogs and power-ups enhance the enjoyment, while the cute touches like the horrified waving crash barriers all add to the feel. Sound is fine, with a bouncy, above-average title tune and more than adequate spot-effects. What really makes LED Storm fun though is the combination of the high speed gameplay and well-graded level of difficultly, so things get difficult without being frustrating.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	66%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	78%
VALUE	72%
OVERALL	**74%**

A

There's very little to distinguish this from the ST version. Both run at the same speed, and as such the gameplay is identical. In this case the sound had been beefed up, but apart from that it's business as usual.

PRICE	£19.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	65%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	78%
VALUE	72%
OVERALL	**74%**

One of LED Storm's many cute touches is the inclusion of pesky frogs that appear from time to time. These hang onto the back of your car and put a stop to your jumping antics, so a bit of side-to-side driving is required to see 'em off.

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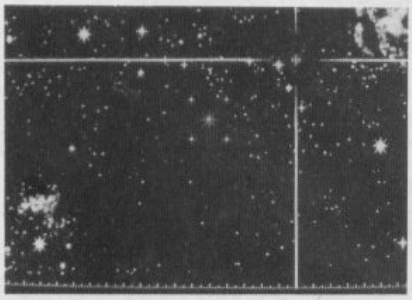
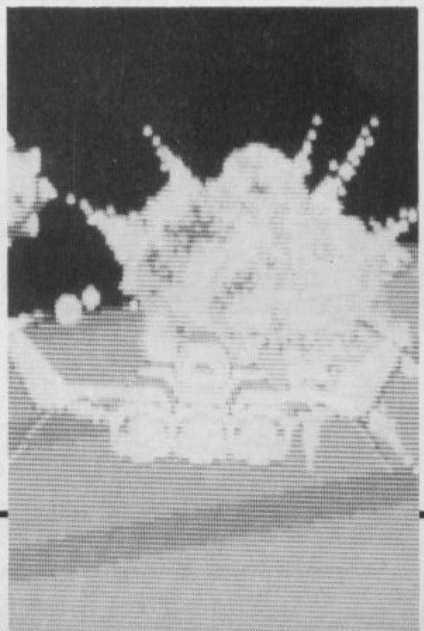
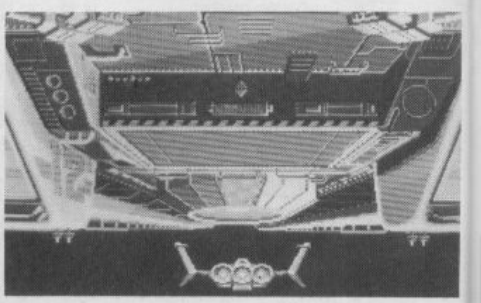
Race-game specialist Titus has taken its first steps into the ever-growing 3D shoot 'em up field with Galactic Conqueror, promising arcade quality graphics and gameplay. But coin-op connoisseur Brian Nesbitt knows a clone when he sees one.

Galactic C



▲ Before you can get down to the serious business of blowing away alien mommas, you select the planet that you want to liberate from alien domination. Red planets are under the enemy's thumb, while those in blue are called 'very far from ally' planets, and so might also benefit from a bit of high-voltage electric destruction.





▲ Your galactic fighter, nattily named Thunder Cloud II, is dropped off at the beginning of each level by a vast throbbing star cruiser. This also appears at the end of the blasting to recharge your shield and to take you to the next field of battle.

Conqueror

The revolutionary 3D graphics pioneered by Sega have had arcade audiences gasping for some time with games like Space Harrier, Afterburner and Galaxy Force, but so far there's been nothing of comparable quality on the ST and Amiga. Both Elite's conversion of Space Harrier and Activision's Afterburner were reasonable attempts, but nothing really startling has appeared as yet. Titus now attempts to put that situation to rights with Galactic Conqueror, a tribute (ahem!) to Sega's own space extravaganza Galaxy Force.

A Galactic Conqueror almost succeeds in reproducing the fast 3D graphic sensation that Sega does so well in the arcades... almost. Unlike Galaxy Force or Afterburner, the play area is very bare, there aren't any cavern sections to negotiate. Instead the whole game is little more than flying over bland two-colour flat landscapes shooting aliens (that don't even appear that often!). As the ship is always brought back to the centre of the screen automatically, avoiding incoming objects seems to be more of a matter of luck than skill. It is fast, sure, but that's only because there's so little going on on-screen. Galactic Conqueror is a wasted opportunity. Hopefully Activision's official conversion of the game that inspired it will be better.

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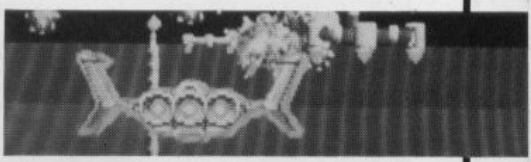
OVERALL 41%



ST Unsurprisingly, there's very little to distinguish this from its Amiga counterpart. The sound is weaker and the game speed ever-so-slightly slower, but otherwise it's exactly the same game.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	43%
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PLAYABILITY	42%
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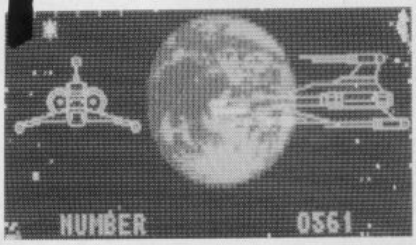
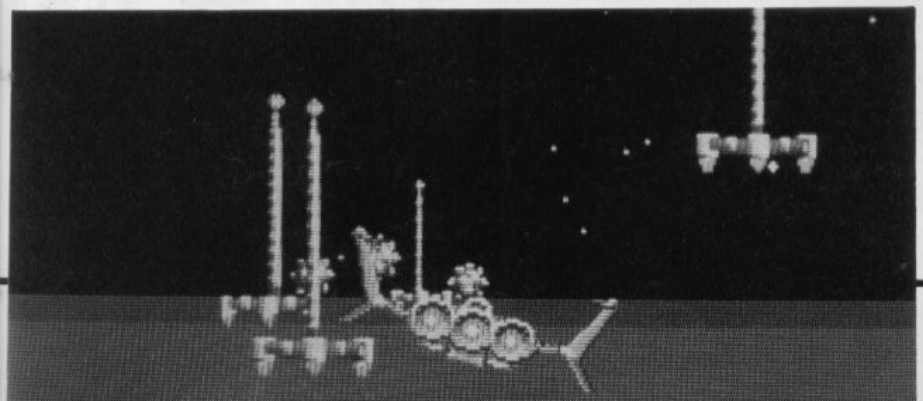
OVERALL 41%

PC Little information as yet, but it should end up quite close to the Amiga and ST versions. Update next month.

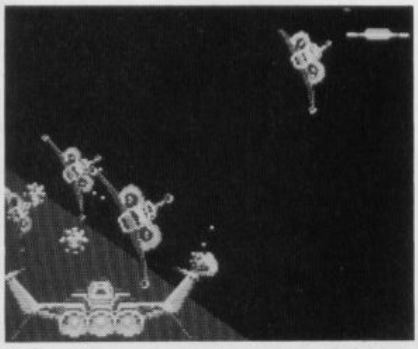
PRICE	£24.99
RELEASE DATE	Out Now

Each level or mission is comprised of three stages, the first being a ground fight, littered with mines, probe-robots (that look uncannily like floating lamp-posts) and the occasional wave of meteorites. The enemy fighters (redesigned A-Wing fighters from Return Of The Jedi) also make an appearance, but don't appear in force until the next two stages: the Aerial and Space fight.





In true Afterburner style you can perform stomach-churning barrel rolls, and you can even stop them half-way through and carry on fighting upside down, although this is more of a graphic frill than an integral part of the gameplay.



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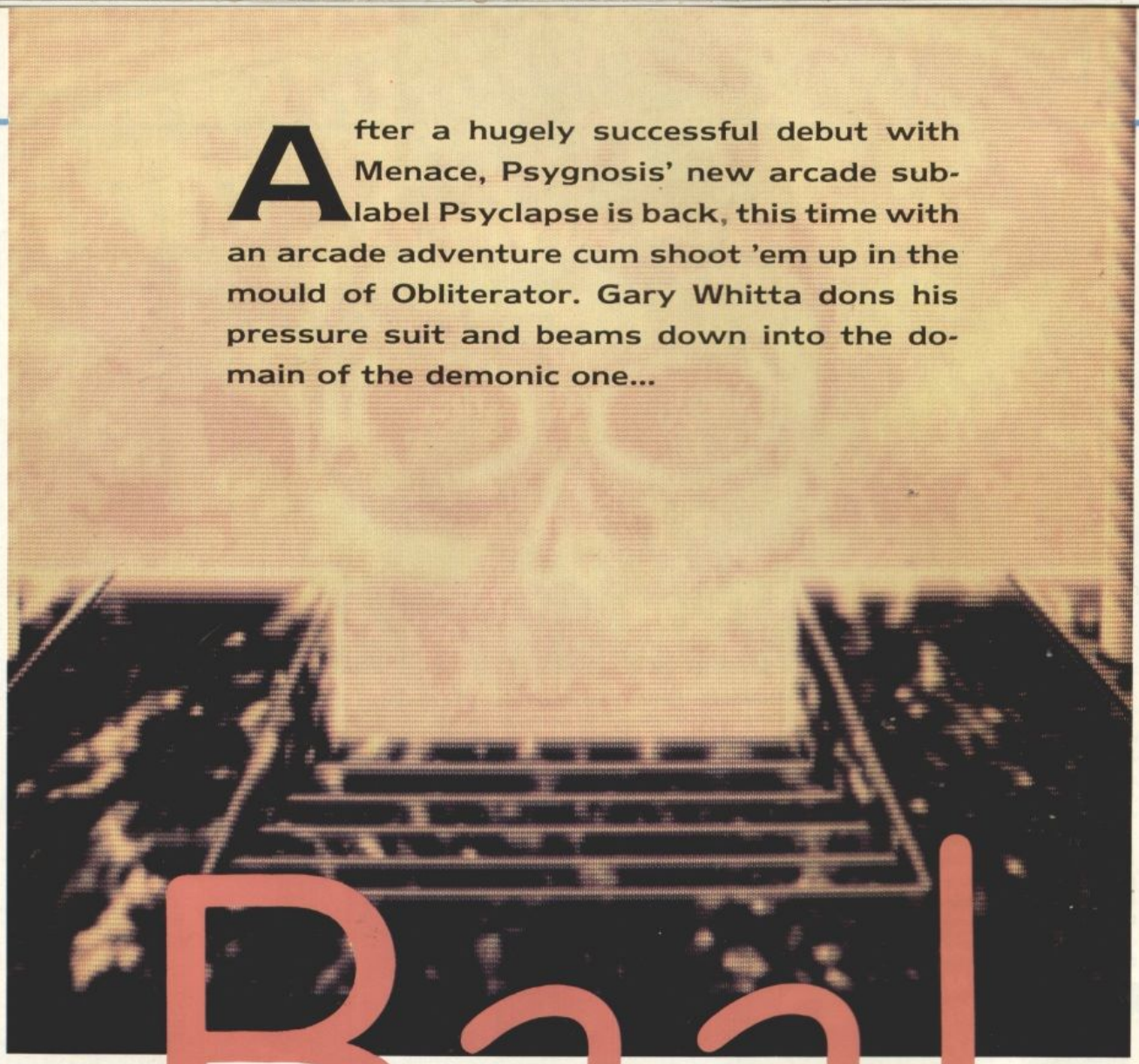
Baal

After a hugely successful debut with Menace, Psygnosis' new arcade sub-label Psyclapse is back, this time with an arcade adventure cum shoot 'em up in the mould of Obliterator. Gary Whitta dons his pressure suit and beams down into the domain of the demonic one...

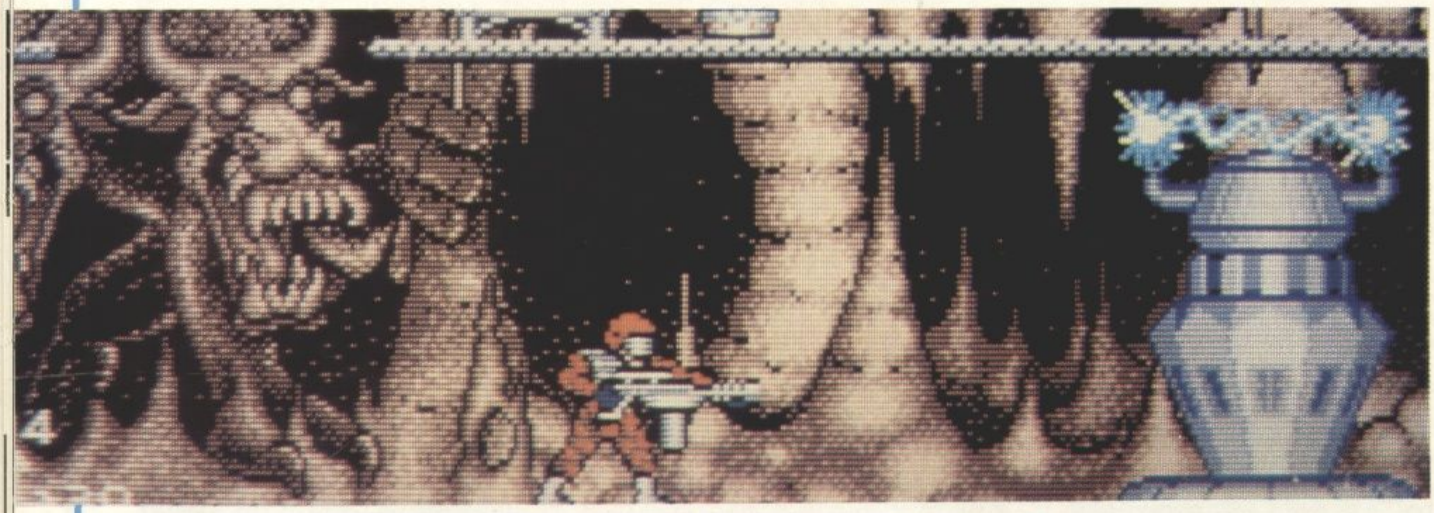


The Baal of the title is an irate demon who has been summoned into our dimension due to a cock-up by a group of amateur archeologists (the full silly story can be found in the manual).

While this creature is planning the planet's demise, a heroic time warrior is beamed into its cavernous home. Not surprisingly, this is an excuse for an arcade adventure with blasting overtones set over several levels and hundreds of screens.

Baal's minions come in all shapes and sizes, but they tend towards the green and slimy. Bodily contact is fatal, while their venom reduces your energy level. The standard laser cannon is rather weedy, so before you can start wasting aliens properly you'll need to find more advanced weapons cartridges.

REVIEW



Some walkways and passages are blocked by powerful plasma energy beams. To shut these down, the fusion reactors which generate them must be located and destroyed with laser fire. Different reactors power different beams, so you may find that by destroying the wrong reactor you've inadvertently shut down the beams on another platform and your way ahead is still blocked.

The idea is to locate the scattered pieces of a war machine, blasted across three levels. Beam in, collect all the pieces on that level and beam back out again... then repeat the process on the next level. Each levels's massive size makes finding the pieces difficult, so a lot of exploring needs to be done beforehand.

ST

Although Baal doesn't break any new ground in games design (it's little more than a simple arcade adventure at heart), it does what it sets out to do very well. The exploration aspect is interesting (although the play area is large there's always something to see or do) while the blasting action is something to get your teeth into. The gameplay is backed up by some pleasant graphics with fast and smooth scrolling. The sound however, is poor and the effects begin to grate before long. As arcade adventures go, Baal is as good as they come – but the lack of originality may do serious damage to its staying power.

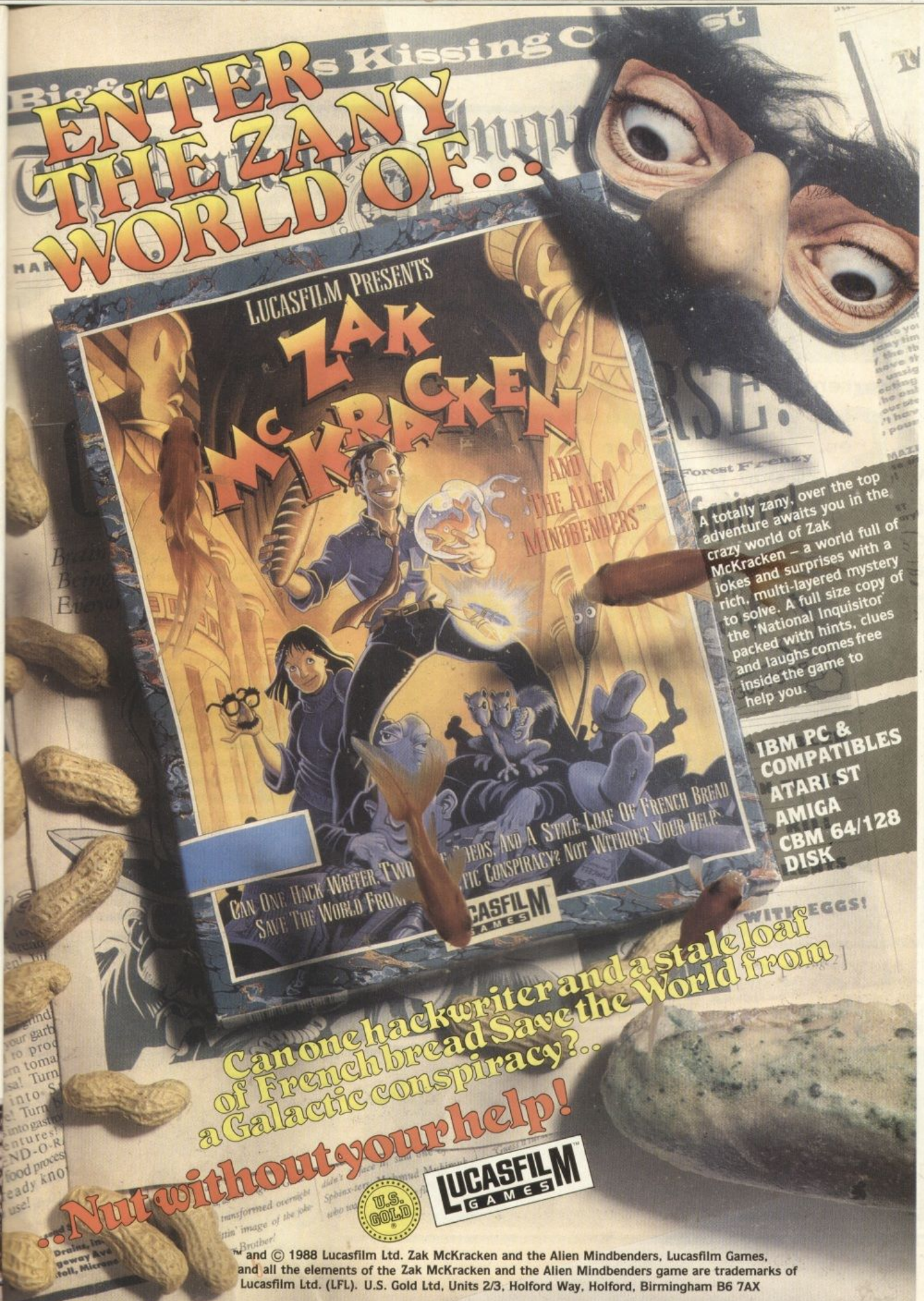
PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	72%
SOUND	58%
PLAYABILITY	70%
VALUE	58%

OVERALL 67%

A

No great difference is expected, other than the normally enhanced graphics and sound.

Having battled your way through rows of energy blockades, you may come across an old telephone box labelled 'Out of order'. This contains a shiny new rocket pack to jet around the caves with, doing away with the need for ladders. Be sure that you've collected enough fuel pods before taking off though... running out of fuel is deadly.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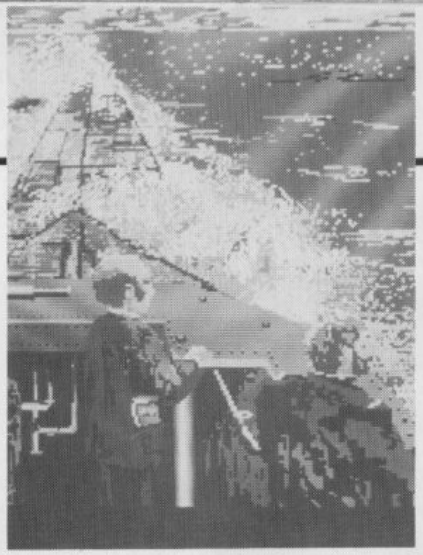
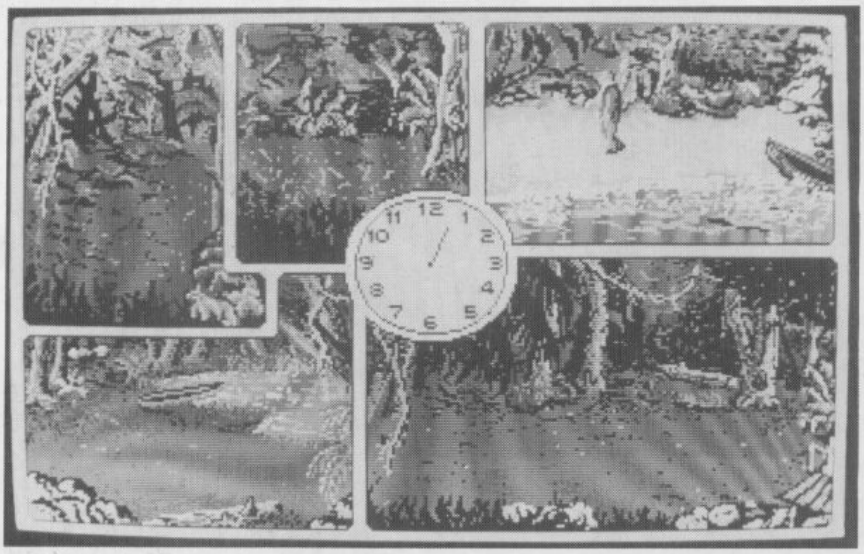
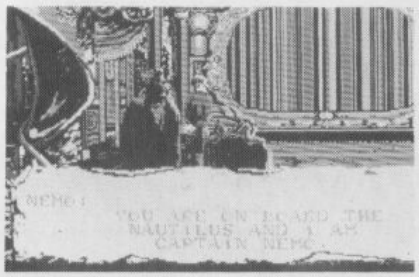


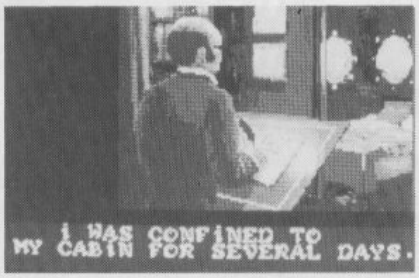
20,000 Und

French 'storybook' style software has not yet really taken off on these shores. Graham Taylor looks at Coktel Vision's 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea and asks the question: does this game probe new depths in game design or will it sink without a trace?



The island sequence illustrates concisely the strengths and weaknesses of this kind of game. The locations are illustrated as though in the pages of a comic – framed but with beautifully drawn backgrounds. Great. Your character is a smallish figure you can move somewhat jerkily between each frame. Not so great. The challenge is to explore the island and pick up clues in a tight time limit. However this arcade element doesn't really work.





Even if you haven't read the book you've probably seen the dodgy Hollywood movie of 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea. It tells the story of Captain Nemo, his giant submarine Nautilus and the group of everyday Victorian adventurers who stumble into it.

It's a theme ripe for computer game plucking because it mixes lots of action with a kind of dated stylishness that gives graphic designers a chance to show off. And graphic presentation is something that seems to obsess the French software houses – maybe it's to do with their rich tradition of comic book art – and, for English tastes, it's led to games which are pretty to look at... but not much else.

In particular it's led to a curious genre of games that I'd call (for want

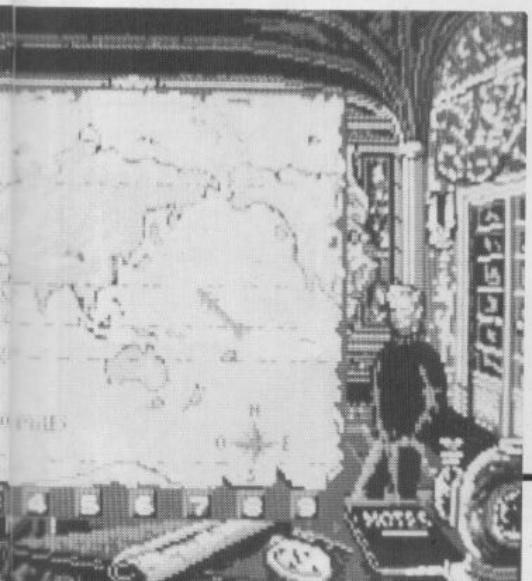
0 Leagues der The Sea

of anything else) 'storybook'. The screen layout looks rather like the pages of a book, there is a lot of descriptive text and far less continuous interaction than in most games. What arcade sequences there are, are limited (and usually awful).

20,000 Leagues is very much in this vein, you spend quite a lot of time just *looking* at the pretty pictures. That said, this 'storybook' has more action in it than many of the others and could just make it in the UK.

You play Monsieur Aronnax, a French professor who, with his friends, lands aboard the Nautilus when it smashes through his ship. In order to survive, you must learn as much as you can about the ship and Captain Nemo as quickly as possible.

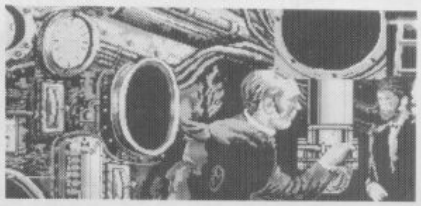
Here's an example: in the opening screen – the Nautilus living room – there is at least one exit from which it is a big mistake to leave, namely the one to the outside. Glub. End of Game.



Nemo's cabin contains a wealth of clues among its Victorian plaything. Books are always a good place to start – and what about that organ?

There are more subtle hazards as well: if you start playing around with the controls of the ship you are likely to be confined to your cabin – thus wasting precious time.

Much of what happens depends on your being in the right place at the right time. For example, early in the game you get the opportunity to explore a mysterious island – but only if you perform the right sequence of actions at the right time. Get it wrong or miss the clues and this section is missed forever.



A I got some way into the game and I guess I was more hooked on this one than any of the other 'storybook' packages I've seen, but I still don't think it quite works. There's a strong storyline, excellent comic style graphics and superb sound effects (though the opera sample at the beginning is a bit bizarre). It also integrates some arcade sections into the overall design more slickly than I've seen before. Not slickly enough yet though. The arcade side is its weakest aspect, it feels 'bitty' and lacks excitement. Maybe it does come down to some elusive cultural difference, such that the French love this kind of thing and the British need more obvious excitement in their games. This one doesn't quite make it, but maybe next time starting with game design first and then doing fabulous pictures might finally produce a marvellous game.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	80%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	56%
VALUE	53%
OVERALL	**59%**

ST There are unlikely to be any major differences, although the atmosphere so ably generated by the Amiga will suffer slightly at the hands of the ST.

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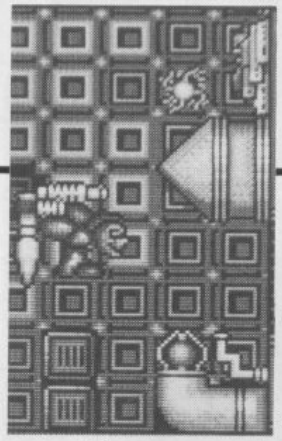
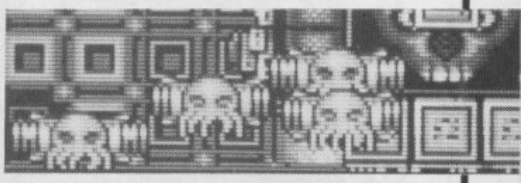
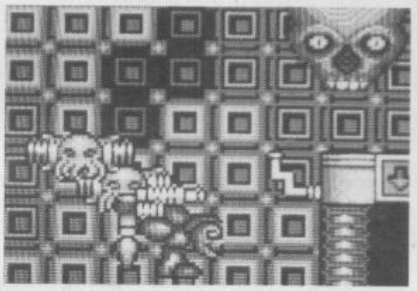




Hewson continues its shoot 'em up onslaught with Custodian, hyped as the most hectic blaster to date. Armed to the teeth, Gary Whitta puts the body-baggers on overtime.

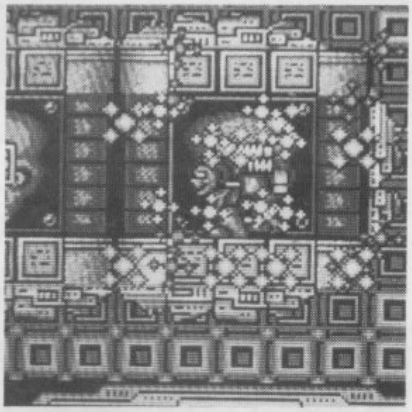
Custodian

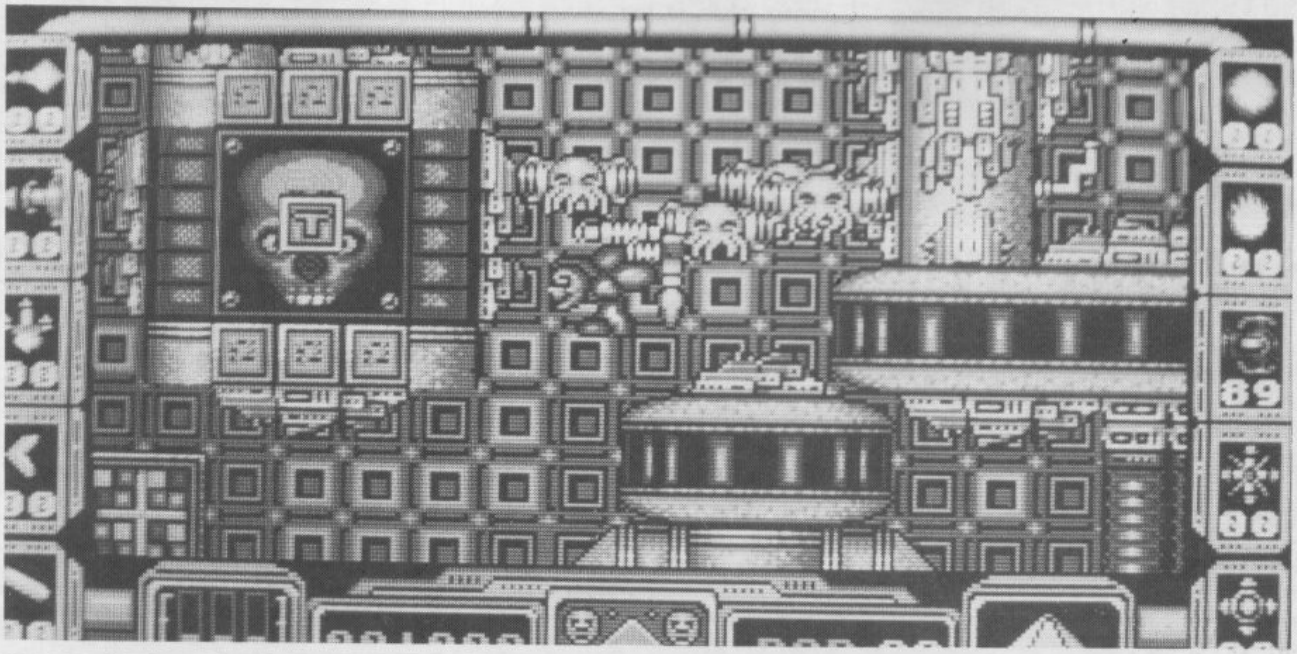


Movement through the large burial chambers is considerably eased by accessing teleport cubes. However, using these is an easy way to get lost as your re-entry point is completely randomised.

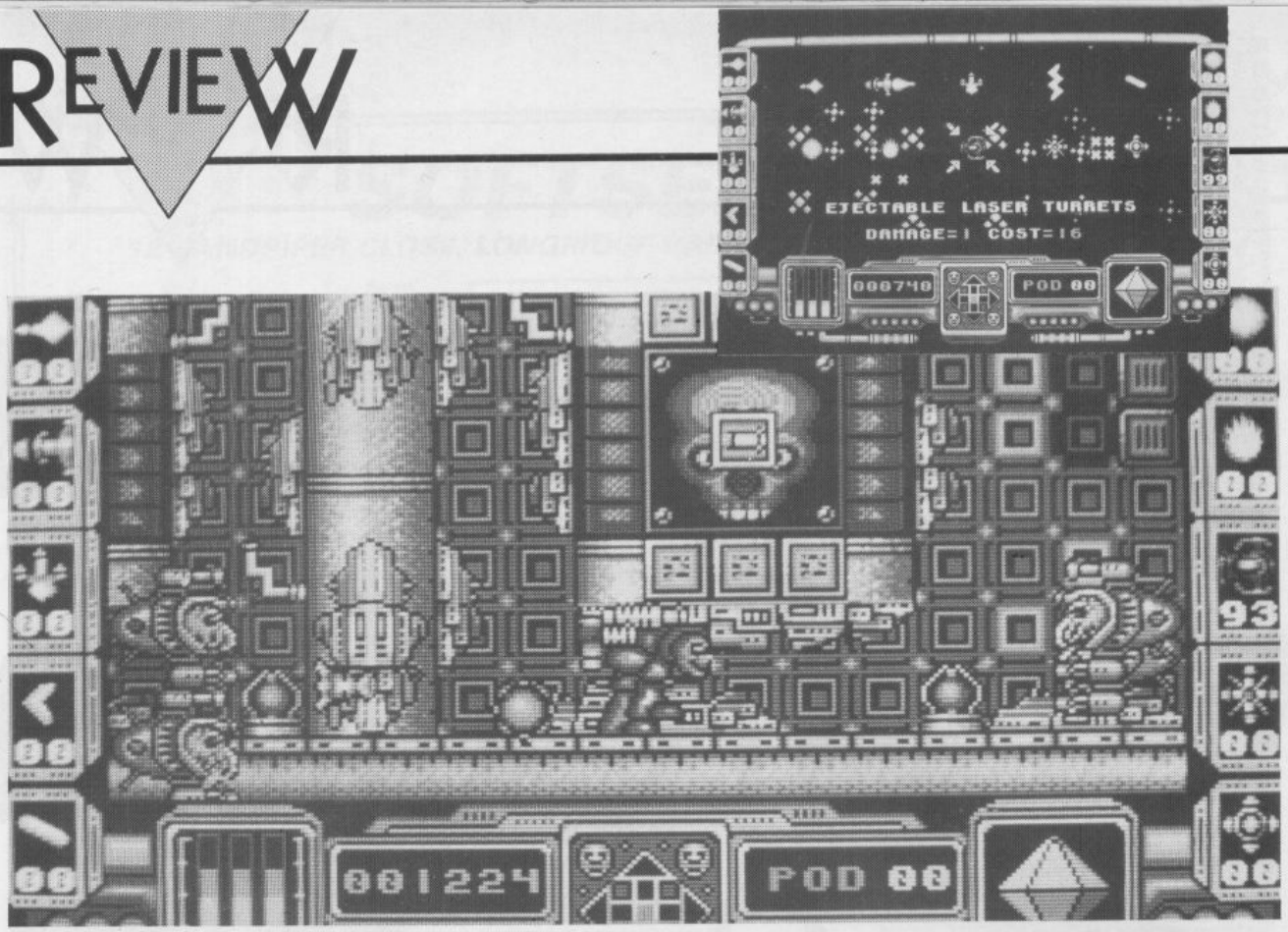
As chief guardian of a futuristic cemetery, a death chamber where corpses are preserved in nuclear-powered-tombs, your mission is to fend off the attack of biological parasites which threaten deactivation.

There are three tombs to protect, each some 250 screens large and scrolling in every direction. Armed initially with just a simple laser, your goal is to build your strength up and ultimately destroy the bacteria-ridden pods which threaten to infect the entire chamber.

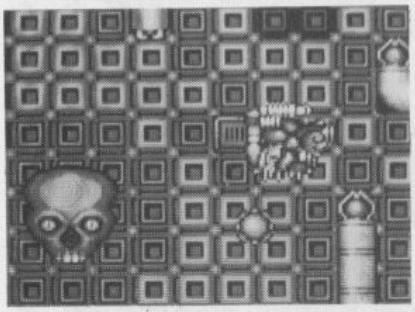


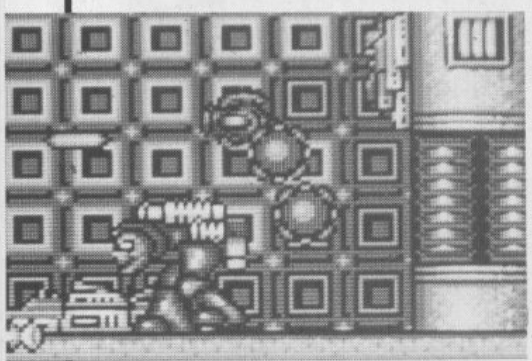


REVIEW



▲ The first objective is to upgrade the weapon systems. Blow away a few nasties and pile up some points so you can visit a weapons locker, where your points can be traded off for meatier weapons such as rocket shells, electro bolts, fireballs, smart bombs and homing missiles. The only gripe is that all this awesome hardware has to be selected with the function keys *a la* Cybernoid.



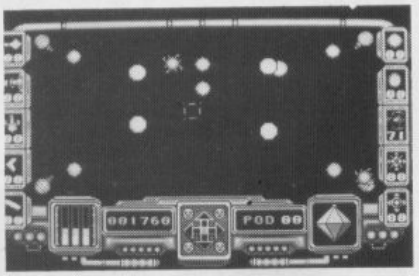


A Custodian is a fair attempt – but it could have been a lot better. The game is fast and smooth, giving a good hectic feel, but there are times when it gets just too fast to keep up and all track is lost of what's going on. The weapon chambers work well enough to add to the gameplay and the pod-blasting section is fun, but this doesn't appear often enough to make a real impact. More of this section would have gone down well. The graphics are fine and very colourful, although there are some poorly defined sprites – the most noticable being the main character! However, the sound is poor, with David Whittaker supplying a few mediocre tunes that don't add a great deal. On the plus side, there's a define keys option (something that is sadly lacking in nearly all 16-bit offerings) and there's certainly enough action to keep hardened blasters happy for a (shortish) while.

PRICE	£19.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	58%
PLAYABILITY	72%
VALUE	66%

OVERALL 67%

▼ Collected pods are taken to a special 'black hole' chamber (normally found in the corners). Once inside, blast the pod into oblivion using cross-hair aimed laser rifles in a futuristic shooting gallery.



ST Slightly less colourful, the ST version is also a bit slower (which is perhaps a boon). The gameplay faults are still in evidence though, making success more a matter of luck than judgement.

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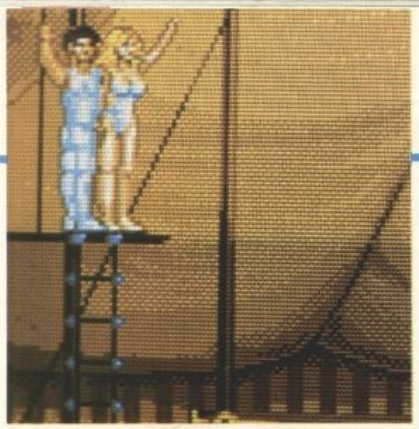
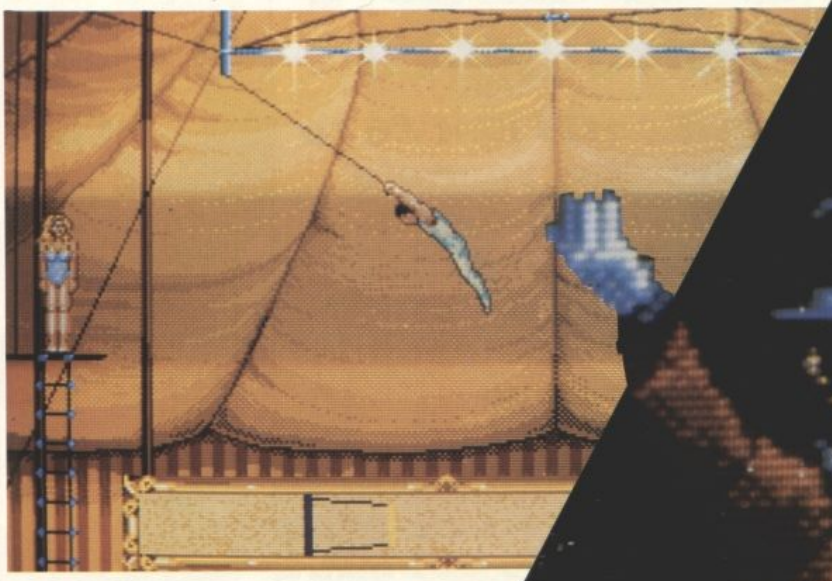


TRAPEZE. As deadly as it is spectacular, the trapeze is undoubtedly the most difficult of all the events. After a lengthy ladder-climbing section (the trapeze is VERY high), you leap out onto the first trapeze. The position of the two trapezes is shown at the bottom of the screen, and after gaining enough momentum with synchronised left-right movements, launch yourself (hopefully) from one to the other. Attempt somersaults or corkscrew manoeuvres in the air, and if you survive, a second artist appears. You can then try the more treacherous task of leaping from one trapeze to be caught by the guy on the other.

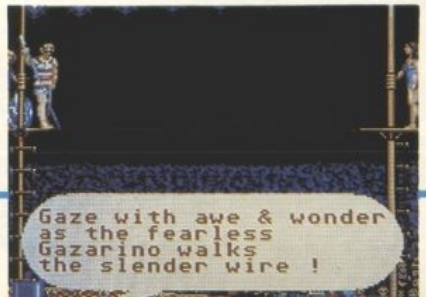


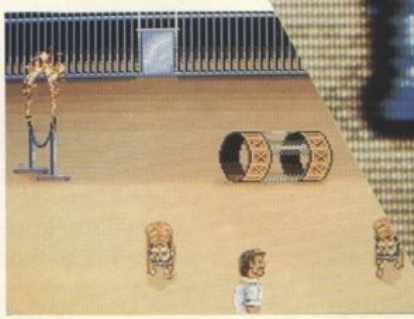
Circus

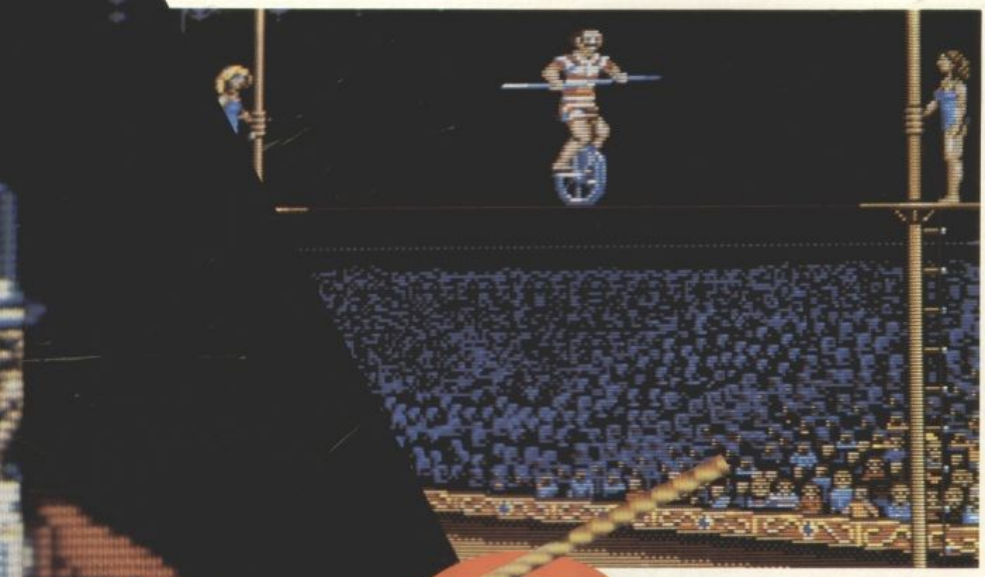
Roll up, roll up, the greatest show on Earth is in town, courtesy of Geordie software house Tynesoft. As the lights dim in the big top, Gary Whitta settles down in a ringside seat.

The Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey (with a little help from Tynesoft) proudly present **Circus Games**, a cracking compendium carnival of spectacular feats of bravery to astound, astonish and amaze you. Up to four players can take part in the four events on offer, or if they're feeling a bit more adventurous they can partake in the Annual International Circus Competition.

A panel of judges records the scores on each event, and at the end of the tournament, the highest scorers are immortalised on disk on the Circus performers' hall of fame. So what are you waiting for? Step right up!

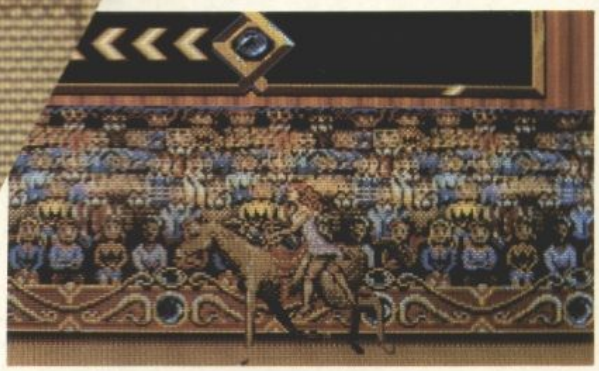




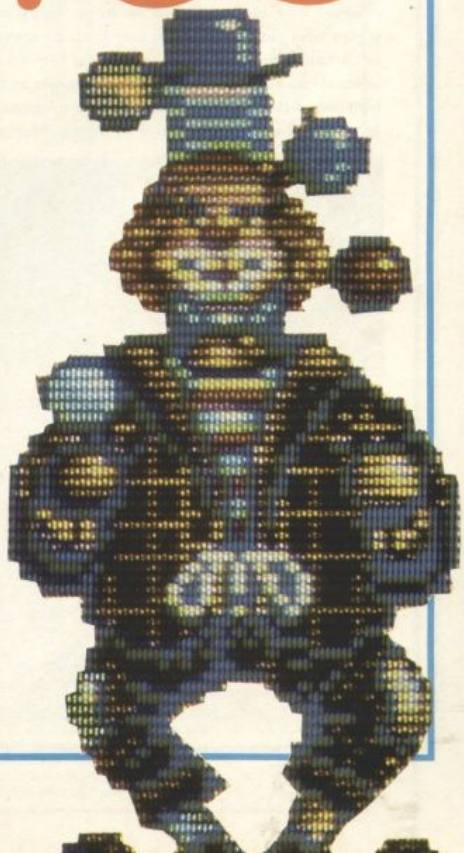


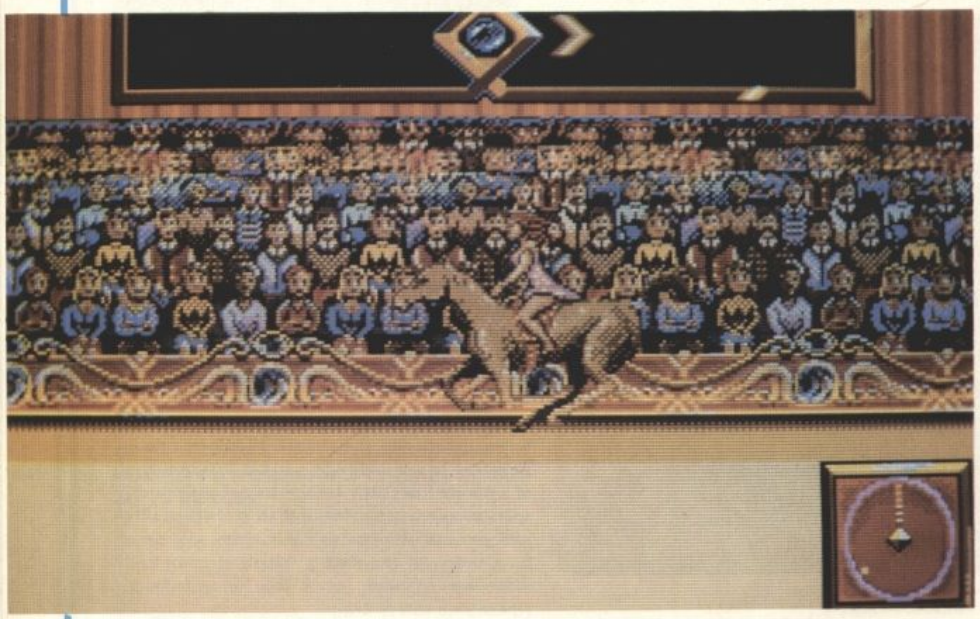
TIGHTROPE WALKING. Dressed in suitably victorian Circus performer's garb (the famous red and white striped swimsuit), you climb the ladder to the perilous highwire. After the smarmy ringmaster promises the gasping audience great things of you, a voluptuous assistant hands you your pole and you step out onto the wire. As your on-screen persona walks across the wire, he wobbles and begins to lose balance, so it's up to you to put things right. For those much-needed bonus points and the chance to impress your girlfriend in the audience, you can attempt any of a number of flashy somersaults, handstands, spins or cartwheels. Make it to the other side and you can attempt to cross again, this time on a unicycle! Maintain a steady rhythm and whatever happens, don't lose your balance (there's no safety net!).

Games

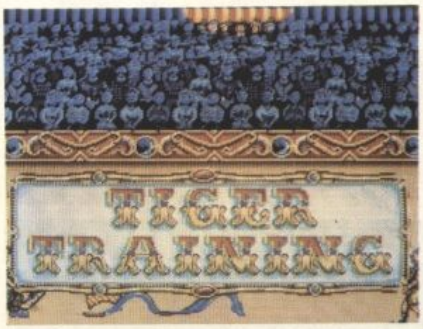


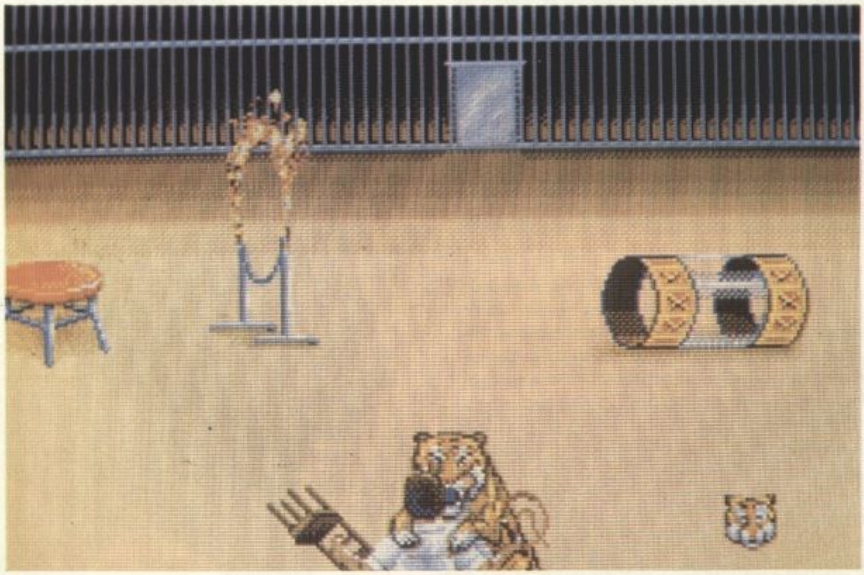
TRICK HORSE RIDING. Step out onto the sawdust as a horse circles the ring, and mount it as it passes. A steady left-right rhythm is required to stay on the horse, as indicated at the top of the screen. Perform awe-inspiring (or if executed incorrectly, spine-shattering) stunts to impress the audience and earn points in the process. Stand up on the saddle, perform a handstand, spin to the left or right, hang down from either side of the saddle and so on. There's also a somersault for those who reckon they've got real horse-sense.





TIGER TRAINING. Armed only with an Indiana Jones-style bullwhip and a chair, send four ravenous Bengal tigers through a simple obstacle course comprising a pipe, a podium and a flaming ring. The tiger head cursor shows where your whip will crack, and if used accurately you move the tigers into the correct position to run the course. The chair is used to keep away any tigers who get too close for comfort. Be careful with the whip though, as repeated hits to an animal increases its Threat Level (shown at the bottom of the screen) until the tiger eventually leaps on you and mauls you to death. Nasty.





ST

The idea for a Circus-based sports simulation has a lot of potential... unfortunately Circus Games narrowly misses the mark. Four events aren't enough for a start. Epyx Games simulations always feature at least six or seven playable events, so why not here? A juggling game would have gone down well, as would a pie fight, fire-eating, acrobats... the list goes on. As for the events present, the tight-rope walking is too easy, while the other three are too difficult. Tynesoft has tried to emulate some of the control modes used in the Epyx series (the trick riding bears a similarity to the Snow Skating events in Winter Games) but it hasn't come off. those with the patience to persevere will derive some enjoyment from Circus Games, but for me, there's not enough fun to be had to warrant the asking price.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	69%
SOUND	60%
PLAYABILITY	61%
VALUE	51%

OVERALL 60%

A

This version is certain to be almost identical to its Atari counterpart, with only slight cosmetic differences to distinguish it. It should be available by the time you read this, also at a price of £24.95.

PC

The PC events are practically identical in terms of gameplay, but only seem to support GGA. So no matter how fancy or powerful your PC, you have to make do with the all-too familiar pink, white and cyan. The graphics also tend to flicker in a distracting manner, especially on the trapeze section. Sound is predictably weak and there aren't so many 'cute' touches either.

PRICE	£24.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	66%
SOUND	54%
PLAYABILITY	57%
VALUE	50%

OVERALL 58%

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Dragon's

SCENE ONE: With the wind howling in his ears, Dirk arrives at the castle and cautiously approaches its entrance.

Crack! The rotting bridge gives way, leaving the resident of the castle's moat with the prospect of dinner as Dirk hangs on for dear life.

But no! Dirk's sword slices the air, and taking advantage of the creature's retreat he pulls himself up and runs into the castle.

's Lair

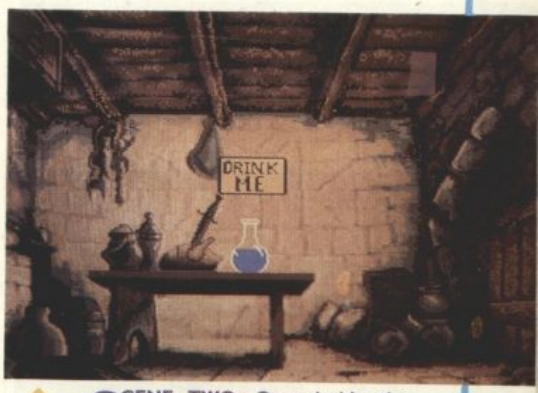
Canadian software house Readysoft's conversion of the classic laser-disc coin-op has reached these shores courtesy of Titus' UK distributors Entertainment International. But it's an experience only for those in possession of a 1Mb machine. Brandishing his broadsword in a belligerent manner, Gary Penn does battle with a bevvy of beasts.

One of the first laser-disc coin-ops to reach these shores was **Dragon's Lair**. Despite the mini-movie's minimal interaction, Don Bluth's baby was very well received.

So well received in fact that a **Dragon's Lair** video was released – The Adventures Of Dirk The Daring, or something similar. More bizarre though, is the fact that **Dragon's Lair** must be one of the only video games to be played by a blind person. By listening to the audio clues, blind New Yorker Felix Pagan practised **Dragon's Lair** and its pseudo sequel **Space Ace** at the Station Break arcade in Manhattan's Pennsylvania Station. His favourite colour? Corduroy of course.

The scenario is a predictable fairy-tale affair. Dirk The Daring attempts to rescue the beautiful Princess Daphne from the clutches of the evil dragon Singe. This task sees him negotiating the horrors found on six disks (at 880K or so each that's . . . oh, around 5.28 Mb of program at least), with two sections to complete each disk.

Each section takes the form of a visual and aural extravaganza with the player making the occasional timely decision – like pressing the fire button to draw Dirk's sword, or moving up, down, left or right to avoid an obstacle. That's five choices. Sometimes objects flash, indicating that you can move towards them. And just to make life difficult, there's the occasional red herring.



SCENE TWO: Once inside the castle, Dirk discovers a room. Is the potion safe to drink or should he escape through the door to the right . . .

SCENE THREE: As our hero makes his way deeper into the bowels of the Dragon's abode, squeaking bats attempt to confuse him and the very ground crumbles at his feet. Timely leaps are the order of the day to stop Dirk tumbling into the depths of the abyss.

SCENE FOUR: Uh-ho. A menacing tentacle appears from the ceiling. Unruffled, Dirk grasps his sword firmly by the hilt and swings with success.

SCENE FIVE: Dropped into a battered barrel, Dirk negotiates the four screens of whirlpool-infested waters before shooting the rapids.

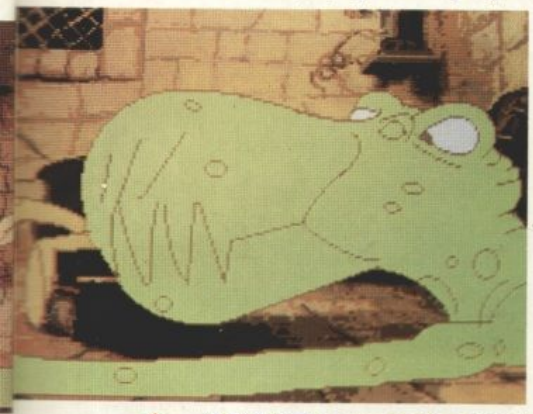
But the bizarre beast isn't beaten – the room erupts as more tentacles burst forth. Dirk's dodging skills are tested to the full. He leaps about the room, testing every possible exit before finally making good his escape through the door at the back of the screen.

SCENE SIX: Another strangely quiet room springs to life with green gook ejaculated from the cauldron in the centre.

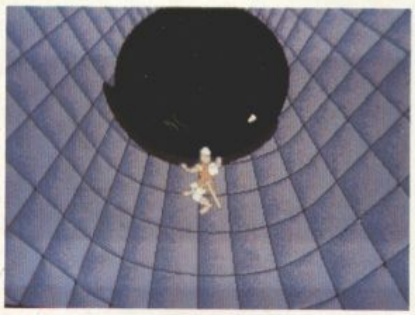
Eurgh! Dirk leaps to one side and cocks a snook at the decor. It's not until a snaking white tongue attempts to lick the sweat from his brow that he springs into action . . .

SCENE SEVEN: Dirk leaps for his life from square to square as the Dark Knight cackles maniacally and taps his electric sword on the floor to send bolts of charge through the Deadly Chequerboard.

Crunch! Dirk's feeling the pir after jumping the wrong way.



Yoiks! The green gook's gobbled the good guy. Serves him right for being so slow on the swipe . . .



SCENE EIGHT: Dirk arrives at a tunnel with six large balls rolling from side to side. The decision whether to brace such a run is made for him when a huge black boulder appears from behind, Indiana Jones-style. Can he outrun it without getting squashed? Only careful timing on your part can decide . . .

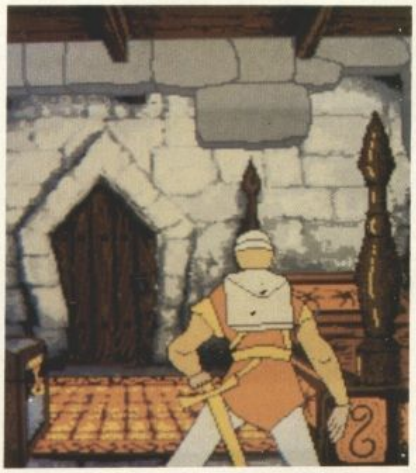
A Dragon's Lair is the sort of program to impress your granny with – or feature on an Amiga promotional video (it would certainly sell a few Amigas). It's visually and aurally outstanding, with silky smooth cartoon-quality animation complemented by moody music and appropriate sampled sounds, making it an experience to behold. But like its arcade parent (which this conversion isn't at times. Some of the more interesting sections are missing, such as The Lizard King, The Earthquake, The Skeleton Attack, The Falling Floor and The Mud Monsters – to name but five. And to top it all, some sections lack certain gameplay elements), Dragon's Lair lacks gameplay. Curiously you have to repeat all but three of the sections with the graphics reversed, which would be all very well if the gameplay was more complex and required you to remember more, but with only a thimbleful of moves to recall, the going isn't made any tougher in most cases – the only exception being the Chequerboard. Having to repeat the bridge section once you're already inside the castle seems a little silly, really. More often than not you seem to spend more time waiting for a section to load than playing it. At worst you endure or enjoy a good 10 seconds of action with interaction restricted to a single press of the fire button! The most annoying aspect though, is having to play through more and more disks as you get further and further, and as you get better and better at the earlier sections, they become less and less interesting. The interactive movie is an exciting concept, but to date there have been very few rousing examples – other than those provided by Cinemaware. Rocket Ranger for example, makes Dragon's Lair look like a glorified demo. This conversion looks and sounds outstanding, sure – but as far as playability is concerned, Software Projects' 8-bit incarnations of two years ago are the men for the job.

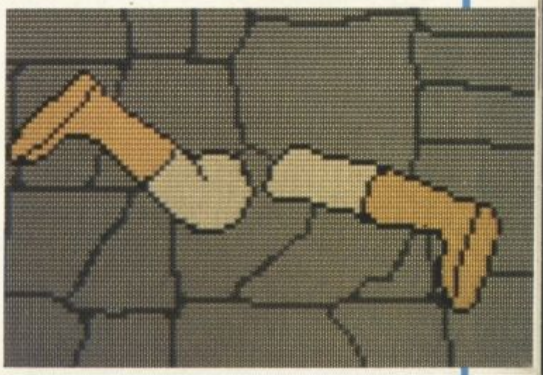
PRICE	£44.95
RELEASE DATE	Out Now
GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	45%
VALUE	31%
OVERALL	**60%**

ST Dragon's Lair already exists for this machine – in the form of Microdeal's laserdisc version for around £200 (and you need a player in the first place). As for a Readysoft conversion . . . Entertainment International reckons that the chances of seeing anything are pretty slim. And with the Amiga version filling six disks, an ST incarnation would fill around a dozen! Egad.

PC Unfortunately there's nothing on the cards. A pity really, as there are a lot of PC owners with hard disks and plenty of memory to go with it, which tends to make Dragon's Lair a more viable proposition – especially with a huge PC following in the States.

SCENE NINE: You have to move fast for the door at the back of the room, as your only chance of exit is being bricked up faster than Max Superhod could manage. Beyond lies a confrontation with Singe the dragon from which only one of you will emerge victor.





DEMOS

Festive Fraüline frolics aside, we're not exactly awash with eye-droopingly incredible demos at the moment, so Public Domain Library 17 Bit Software gave us a few to be going on with.

But what about your input? Where are your sights and sounds to impress even the well dressed? If you are in the habit of producing pictures or animations or even dreary old s-s-sampled songs, why not slip 'em into sturdy packaging along with details of how to get hold of them, and send them to us, here at The One. If your work manages to shake the very cheese from our toes, then consider it printed. The address, as ever, is DEMOS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

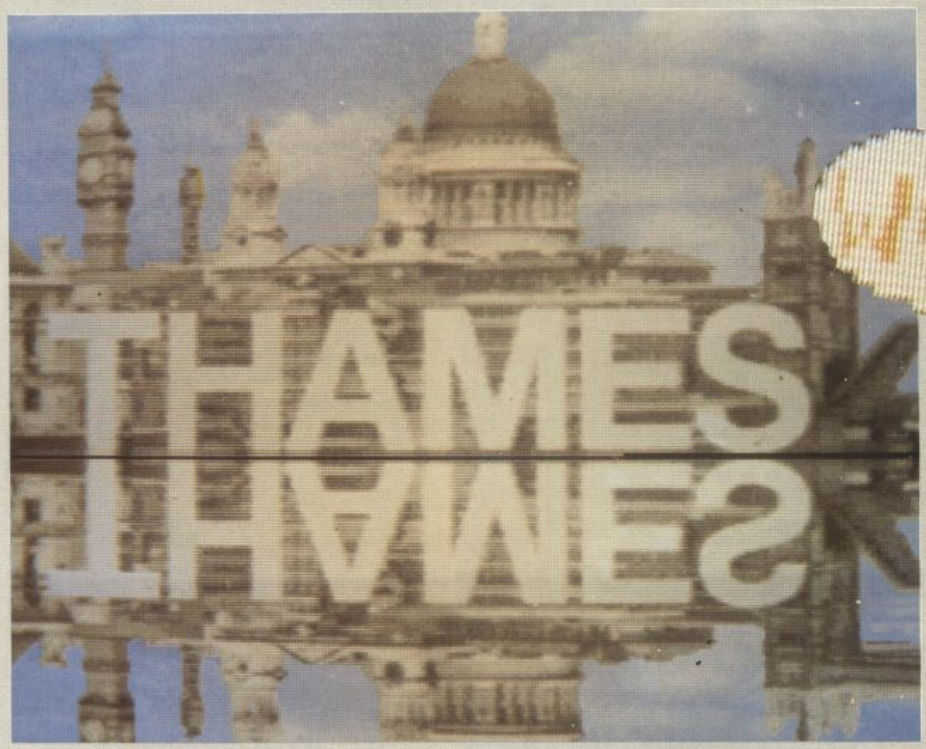
Anyone interested in acquiring any of the demos mentioned here should contact 17 Bit Software at PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX or gerre on t'jelly bone on (0924) 366892. Super Lovely Knock-out.

DISK 70

Coded by Blair and Sullivan, the duo responsible for the Elgato demo, this novel little number presents a digitised silhouette of the late, great Fred Astaire tippity tapping across a mountain backdrop. Pity it's silent really.

DISK 70

Titter, snort, guffaw. **Marketroid** is a parody of Williams' classic sequel to **StarGate** – **Robotron 2084**. Sadly this isn't a playable 'tribute', but a gentle trot down memory lane for anyone who remembers the attract sequence.



DISK 70

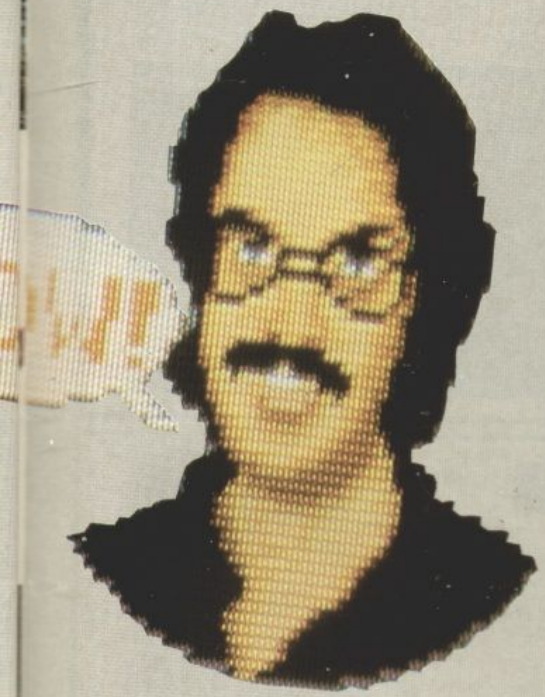
Heavens, my Amiga's turned into a telly... astound and amaze your Ma's 'n' Pa's with this neat adaptation of the Thames Television logo which opens up with a mirror-image and accompanying sound. Very nice.

DISK 49

The sound of chins hitting the floor could be heard for miles around when Eric Graham's classic ray-traced juggler demo was first unveiled. But politely stifled yawns is the best reception this ST incarnation is likely to receive.

DISK 11

A collection of three animated demos fronted by Elgato... the spinning cat used by Commodore as a showpiece at the 1987 PCW Show. Unexpanded users miss out on at least half a revolution of the fully-animated puss in a frame. Also appearing on this diskette is a ho-hum piece of vector graphic animation of the letters FSW, and a Sculpt 3D WWI bi-plane buzzing in and out of the screen.



DISK 32 Jings, it's a slideshow! But wait. These pictures of such visual delights as loaves of bread and vintage cars were produced using the DigiView Digitiser, and they almost attain photographic quality. Combined with the soothing sound of some Eno-esque music, this is indeed a demo to impress the girls with.

DISK 45 Once again Rob Hubbard is the subject of a music demo, and this time renditions of **Monty On The Run**, **Crazy Comets** and **The Human Race** feature alongside a version of **Axel F**. By way of an original touch, two Rob Hubbard heads adorn the screen display, complete with speech hubbles exclaiming 'WOW'. Hubbard lovers are more likely to get their fix from the BIG demo (that's DISK 46 if you're interested).

DISK 159 Giggle, giggle, giggle, **Egyptian Run**, a parody of Sega's **OutRun**. So bad it's bad.

DISK 163 Harold Faltermeyer's Axel F has been digitised and remixed more times than Eddy Murphy's said F**K. But by the way of a change, this latest ST s-s-sample song is ShootOut, the Faltermeyer-composed B-side to Axel F. Spaz of the Lost Boys is the man responsible for this so-so s-s-sample of the whole record, but hasn't got the same Fun Factor as the neverending Pump Up The Volume demo.

ST DISK 159 **Asteroids** – a competent rendition of Atari's ageing coin-op, and one of four interactive demos on this diskette. The boulder-destroying classic plays well and has been reproduced in hi-res to give the feel of the arcade original. Coo. Also featured on this disk is a two-player **Battleships**-style game entitled **Gravity Wars**, which requires a Degree in Trigonometry and a basic understanding of Physics to play. Marginally more interesting is **Backgammon**, an adaptation of that dusty old board game.

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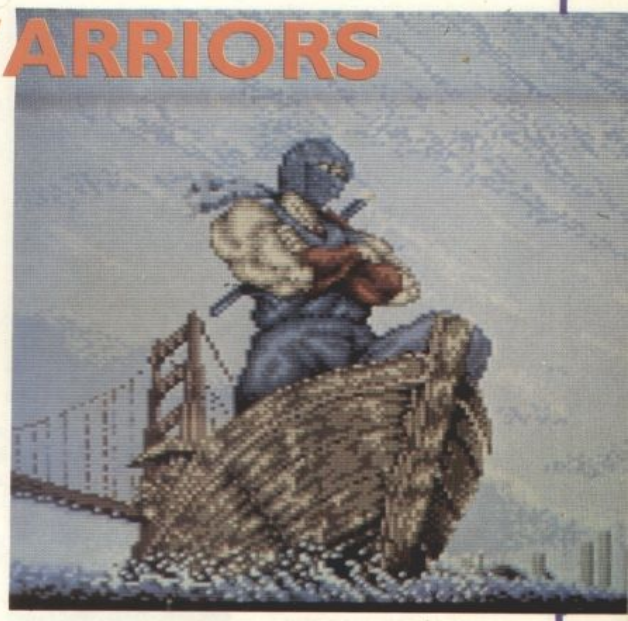
SHADOW WARRIORS (Tecmo)

Ciarán Brennan begs, steals and borrows enough silver money to spend an afternoon at his local arcade – only to find that there's little new to report...



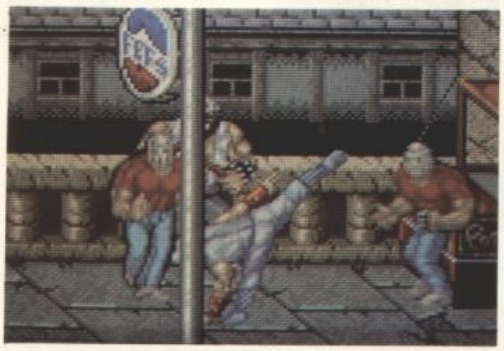
This one or two player Ninja fighting game is the first 'large format' arcade game to reach these shores, utilising the bigger screen previewed by Nick Kelly in Issue Three. This allows for both larger characters and a more open play area – but does this necessarily produce a better game?

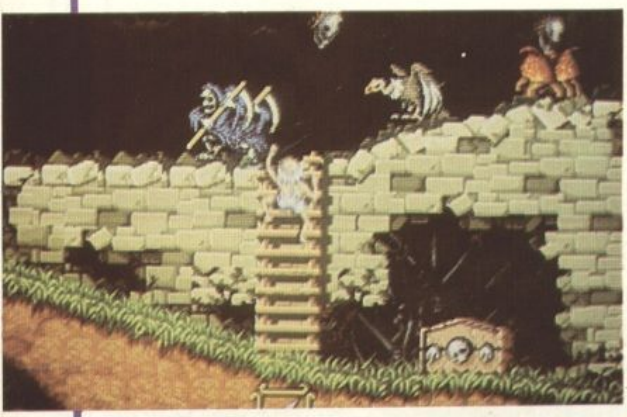
One thing that's certainly been well thought out is the attract sequence that graphically depicts the Ninja's arrival in New York and his initial confrontation with that city's rougher element. After about five minutes of big screen demo action, it's straight onto the scrolling streets to do battle with a seemingly unending supply of vindictive New Yorkers.

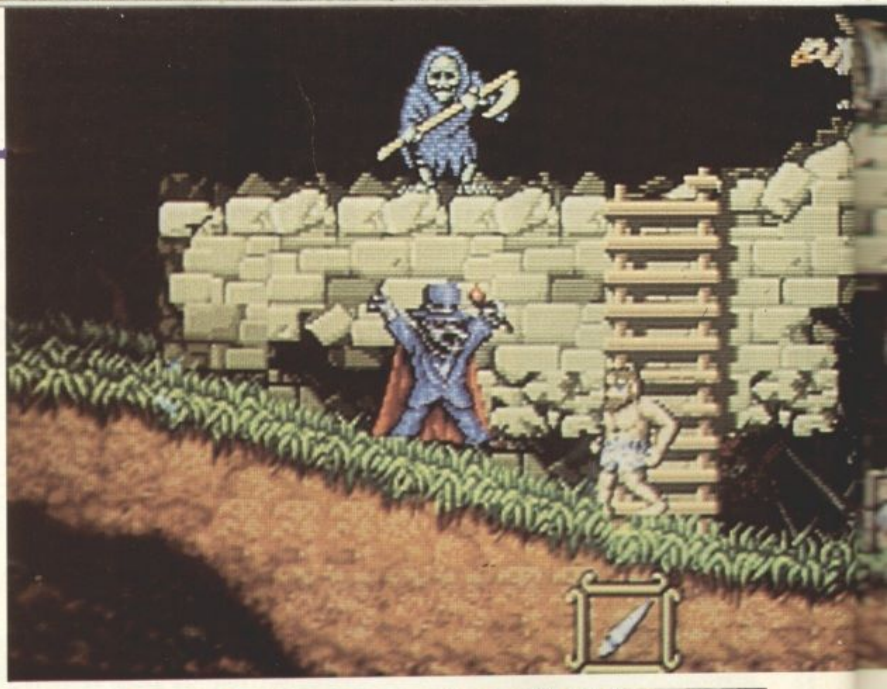
The backgrounds are interactive – ie: they can actually be used to affect the game. For instance the hero has one particularly impressive acrobatic manoeuvre that can only be executed by leaping upwards and spinning from a streetlamp – this is one tricky move that needs loads of practice.

The difficulty factor is probably the trickiest thing to get right with fighting games – if they're too easy they get boring incredibly quickly, or on the other hand if they're too difficult then frustration sets in. Unfortunately this one errs too much towards the latter.

There are invariably too many opponents on screen at any one time, and if any one of them lands a punch then it's very difficult for the hero to get back into the fight. Consequently his three lives disappear all too quickly, and even the addition of extra weapons doesn't do much to put things right. I'd imagine that Shadow Warriors will appeal to big butch hard guys who've already beaten the lights out of other fighting games and are waiting for a new challenge – but beginners would be well advised to steer clear.





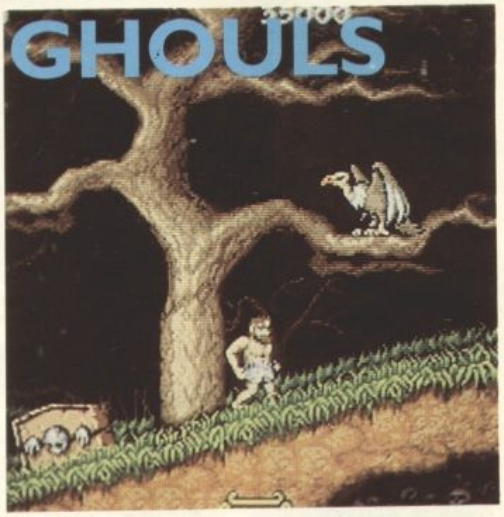


GHOSTS 'N' GHOULS (Capcom)

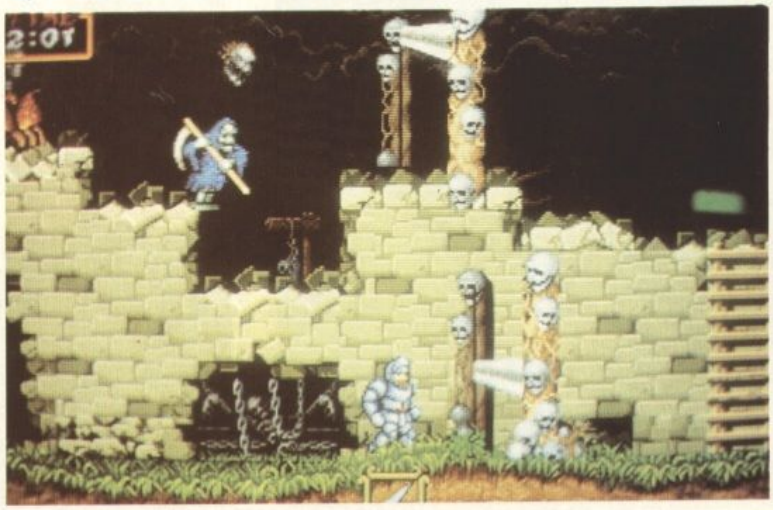
Three years has passed since Sir Arther Lancelittle first braved the coin-op screens in Ghosts 'n' Goblins, but now he's been brought out of retirement for his most dangerous mission yet. The brave knight has been called upon to rid the land of evil demons who have taken up residence in his absence, but as he rides in on his trusty steed the ghosts strike first and the horse falls to the ground. What hope is there for an unmounted knight? Only time will tell.

Despite the more modern style, the original has been faithfully adhered to, Arther now races along a rising and falling landscape using his ingenuity and any of eight available weapons to clear his way. The knight's ultimate quest is to search every treasure chest along the route for the missing magic armour.

A demonic army of grim reapers and hungry vultures litters the route, attempting to end the knight's quest. An initial hit removes the hero's armour, while a second shot is enough to finish one of his three lives. Other enemies which crop up from time to time include hidden sorcerors who turn Arther into an old man and seriously slow him down. Although this effect is only temporary it can often be enough to allow the enemy to close in.



Sequels often end up as poor substitutes for their original games, but Ghosts 'n' Ghouls is a definite exception. The rolling hills add greatly to the gameplay and it takes



DOUBLE DRAGON II – THE REVENGE (Technos)

Billy and Jimmy Lee thought that they could settle down to a quiet little life when they'd rescued their girlfriend from the evil drug runners – but they were wrong. There's a new gang in town and they're not interested in kidnapping – the evil miscreants have gunned the boys' girlfriend down (what did that girl ever do?) and the fight is on again.

The Revenge is more of the same, with different backgrounds to explore, harder enemies to fight and more deadly weapons to pick up and use. There's also a couple of extra moves that the boys have picked up in their travels (including the Roundhouse Kick and the Hurricane Kick), but I found these a little hard to get to grips with.

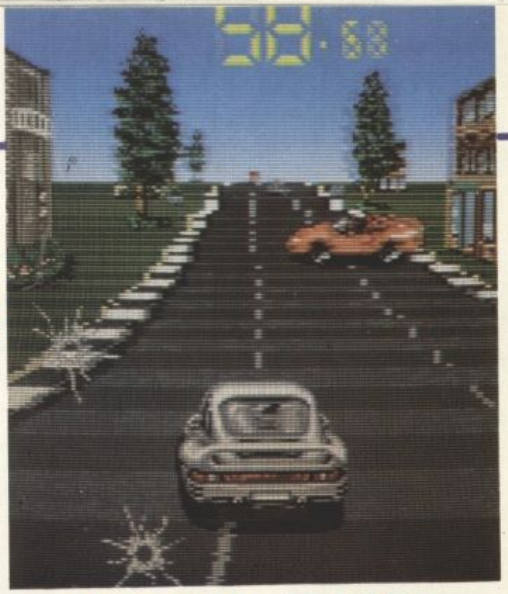
The enemy has also picked up a few tricks along the way, so veterans of the original who think that they're going to stroll through this sequel had better think again – in a lot of cases it's back to the old drawing board I'm afraid.

I was all set to recommend DDII wholeheartedly until I came across one major flaw – the control system. Although the original's three button and joystick set-up has been retained, the configuration has change so that the buttons are now laid out in a straight line instead of the triangular format. Because of this I found it quite difficult to get to grips with most of the fighting moves – and the gameplay's speed doesn't exactly allow time for practice.

That said, Double Dragon II is a good beat 'em up, which, like its predecessor, is best enjoyed in company as the single player mode is a little too difficult.

ages to work out what to do on most occasions. This is definitely something more than a scroll down memory lane – highly recommended.

HOT CHASE (Konami)



Buckle up for yet another racing game which attempts to develop the idea of Chase HQ – that is, a racing game with a built-in pursuit element. The difference is that in Chase HQ you race against other vehicles, whereas in this case you're racing against the clock as there's a time bomb in your car that can only be defused if you reach your destination within a set time limit.

This may sound like a real nail-biting scenario, but unfortunately the lame action and sloppy control method really lets it down.

The problem stems mainly from the fact that the car doesn't behave realistically; it takes some corners at incredibly high speeds while jumping off the track in the strangest of places. The awful flicker and jerky road don't do anything to alleviate the problems.

It's not all bad though. There's a certain excitement generated by the opposition attempting to either blow you off the road or block your way. These can either be rammed or jumped if an appropriate ramp shows up – but once again these ended up as little more than an irritant.

Hot Chase is a good idea alright, it just hasn't been executed properly. If Chase HQ is a Ferrari, then this is the Skoda Vitesse of driving games I'm afraid.

ENFORCE (Taito)

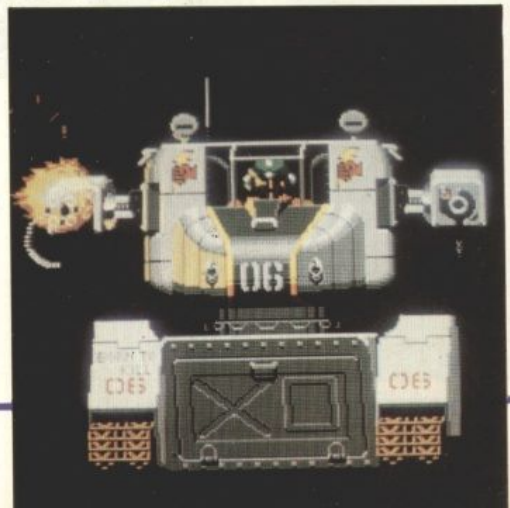
I wasn't aware that the US Navy was the proud owner of laser-equipped military robots – but as this game is licensed from that very body then this must be the case. Enforce puts you in remote control of this futuristic vehicle, manoeuvring it into a 3D scrolling roadway and against a number of robotic enemies.

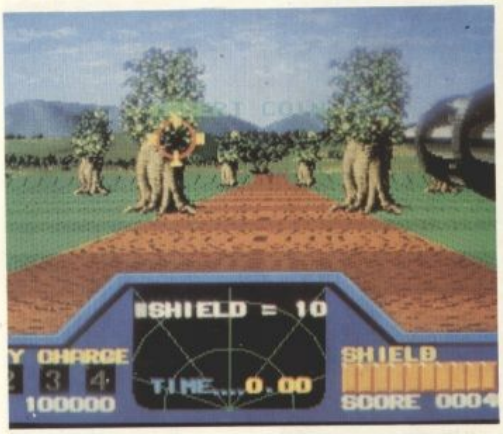
For what it's worth, the gameplay is remarkably simple. The futuristic steering 'wheel' contains two fire buttons – one of which controls the left-mounted laser cannon and the other controls the right-mounted Gatling gun. There's a token scenario bolted on involving rescuing a kidnapped girl, but basically it's nothing more than a simple 'shoot everything that moves' effort.

Everything that moves consists of four futuristic fighting machines, each with a nickname that doesn't appear to have been properly translated from the original Japanese. The Fighter Plane is known as Coyote – fair enough, but the Unmanned Laser is a 'Tochka' and the Laser Cannon Tank is dubbed 'Iron Rock' – very odd.

The 3D system is similar to that used in Continental Circus, utilising a very similar suspended pair of glasses. Unlike that racing game however the effect just simply doesn't work, and unless the player closes one eye (or reverts to two dimensions by re-pressing the start button) then things get pretty confusing.

Taito has probably put a lot of time and effort into this 'simulation' – especially considering the US Navy's alleged involvement. However the end result is sadly lacking, being difficult, monotonous and, worst of all, very hard on the eye.





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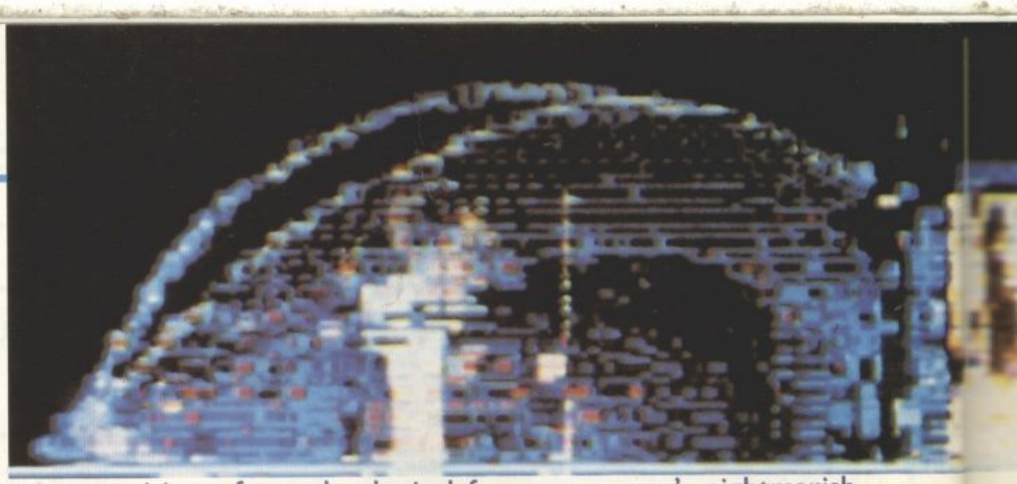


Cyberpunk. Is it an insane vision of a technological future, or man's nightmarish destiny? Paul Boughton catches a glimpse of the next century with William Gibson and Interplay Productions.

Hack To The Future

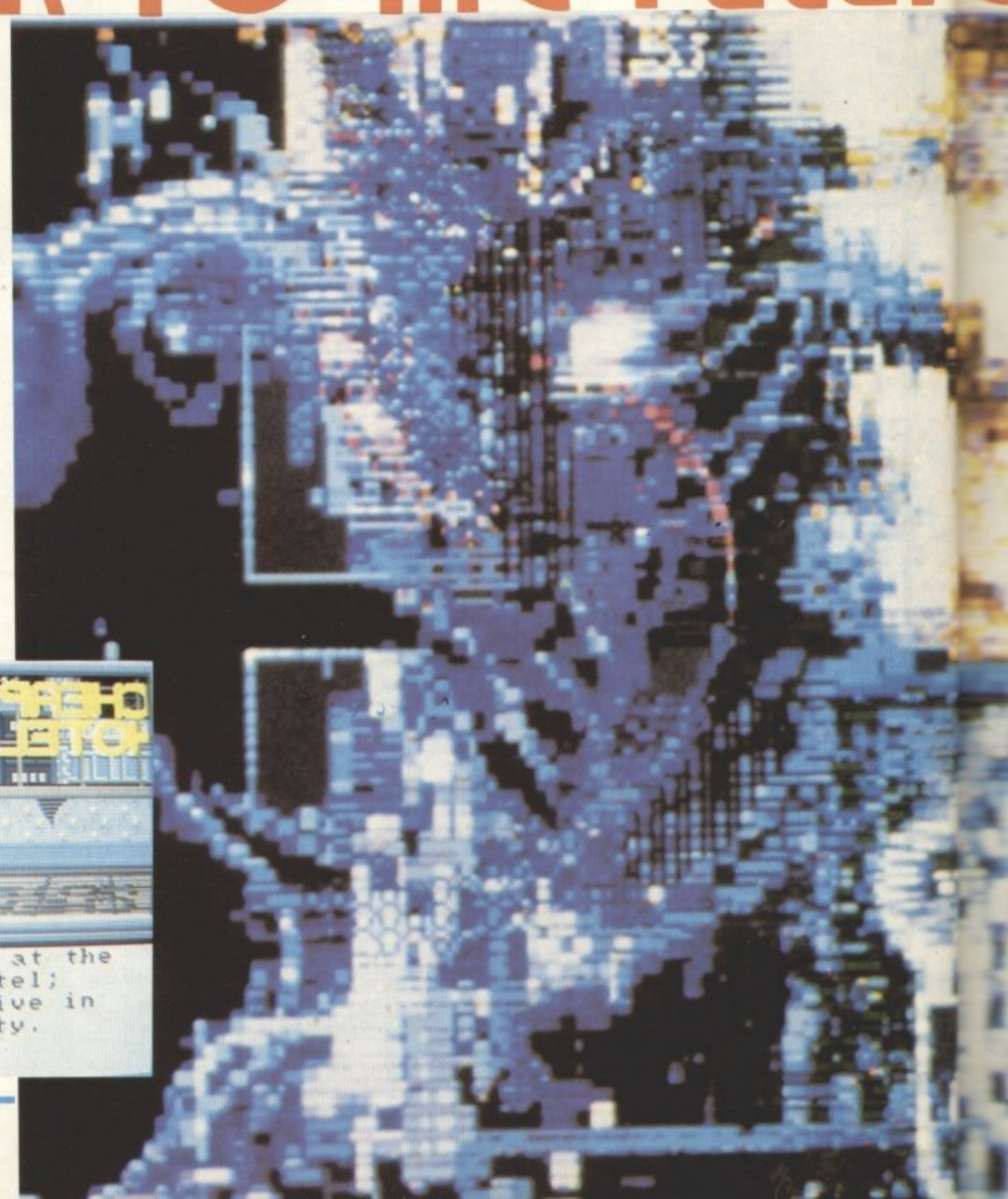
Knowledge is power, power is knowledge. Knowledge lies stored in the computers of governments, multinationals, the military and individuals, protected, hidden and safe from prying eyes.

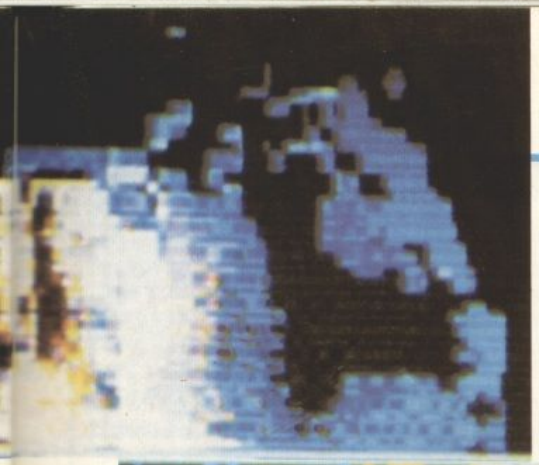
But even the highest security protection can be breached. By the right person, with the right equipment and with enough courage. Nowadays hacking into computer networks can get you into a lot of trouble, but in 100 years time it could get you killed.

Welcome to 21st Century Japan and the world of **Neuromancer**, a greedy, complex world which is hooked into a vast computer system. Information about anything is instantly available from world communication networks linked into the cyberspace grid – a system representing information in the purest form. To access that information, you have to jack into Cyberspace. And risk your life.

Electronic Arts has already released **Neuromancer** as a roleplaying game on the Commodore 64. The American production company, Interplay Productions, is now developing it for the Apple IIe/IIc, MS-DOS and Amiga for release sometime in the Spring.

The game is based on a novel by William Gibson which has won the Hugo, Nebula and Philip Dick Science Fiction awards. It has established Gibson as a leading figure in modern





science fiction and especially in the sub-genre known as "Cyberpunk", Gibson's fiction is based on software rather than hardware. What goes on in the inside, rather than the outside of Gibson's vision of the future of high urban decay coupled with high technology is very much

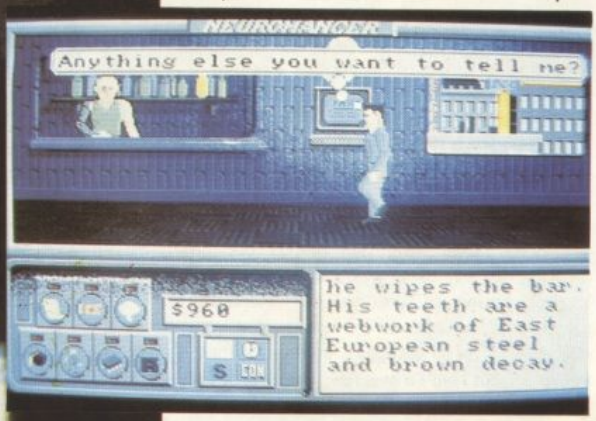
along the lines of **Blade Runner**.

In Interplay's adaptation, the player takes the role of a futuristic hacker, a software cowboy in a world where hacking is not only illegal... it's deadly. The idea is to break into government and corporate computer systems, or to break into Cyberspace to find databases and the man with the most information wins.

Layers of ICE – Intrusion Countermeasure Electronics – protect databases from unwanted intruders, but hacking software can be used to melt the protection system. The setting is Chiba City by Tokyo Bay. Chiba is a magnet for society's techno-criminal culture, notorious for black medicine and body shops. These body shops don't sell bath salts. Limbs, organs and implants are more in their line.

Remember, information is power. And at the beginning of the game you don't have much of either.

Rumours are on the street that several of your friends, other software cowboys, have disappeared. Where have they gone? The answer lies in Cyberspace. Times are hard. Your computer deck has been sold. And for the past two days you've been in a drunken stupor. But friends are friends. It's time to act.


NEUROMANCER
Anything else you want to tell me?
$960
he wipes the bar. His teeth are a webwork of East European steel and brown decay.

The second phase requires you to get together a computerised deck and software which allows you to access phone lines. Deck hardware can be upgraded, but only if you have the money. If you have, check out Crazy Edo's Used Hardware Emporium or Asano Computing, the latter being the guys who deal in the heavy stuff.. full blown matrix simulators. Cyberspace decks, to you.

The third phase involves Cyberspace, shown in 3D. Geometric shapes represent the information bases. In reality Cyberspace is just an image generated by your brain. Without the right computer deck it would just be a complex sea of information. Humans wouldn't understand it.

But travel in Cyberspace can be connected to travel around the real world. Grids are streets. The computer deck is the equivalent of a car.

Interplay Productions has programmed itself quite a pedigree in computer roleplaying games since it was founded back in November 1983 by Brian Fargo. **Neuromancer** will follow the three **Bard's Tale** games, **Mindshadow**, **Borrowed Times**, and **Wasteland** which have all impressed.

The team put together for **Neuromancer** consists of programmer Troy Miles, 25, designers Bruce Balfour, 31, (a screenwriter for television, working for such shows as **Twilight Zone**, **Murder She Wrote** and **Tales From The Darkside**); Mike Stackpole, 34, one of the designers of **Bard's Tale III** and writer of two books for **BattleTech**. Others involved in the project are artist Charles Weidman and Devo for the soundtrack, (with a little help from Timothy Leary). Fargo, 25, now Interplay's president, produced the whole thing.

Fargo and Troy Miles both came up with the design for creating a Cyberpunk product even

before they had acquired the rights to **Neuromancer**. The design was for a game simply called **Cyberpunk**. After just one month into the project a friend of Fargo's at Activision offered the rights to either **Max Headroom** or **Neuromancer**. They chose **Neuromancer**.

It was Gibson's vision of the future which attracted the pair. Says Fargo: "To create a game where technology and information are the essence of life seems very appropriate for a generation that has been brought up on a world of technology.

Fargo continues: "We felt the most important task in the software was to capture the essence of Gibson's world and his characters. We used much of Gibson's prose and we feel we captured the feel of cracking through ICE in Cyberspace quite well. We don't follow the book's plot, instead we've created a new one within the universe that was presented.

The major problem encountered during the creation of the game was the standard problem of fitting everything into RAM and onto disk. "**Neuromancer** is a very big game with a lot of depth and graphics. Specifically, we found the most challenging aspect was the idea of simulating cyberspace. Gibson never fully explains how cyberspace looks, he only gives vague poetic descriptions. We tried four to five different looks until we found the one we were satisfied with," says Fargo.

William Gibson was born in 1948 in Conway, South Carolina, and spent his childhood in western Virginia and southern Arizona. He has a BA in English from the University of British Columbia and met his wife, Deborah, in Toronto, in 1970. After travelling through Europe in 1971, they settled in Vancouver, British Columbia. They now have two children.

Since the publication of **Neuromancer** in 1984, Gibson has published three other books, **Count Zero**, **Burning Chrome** (a collection of short stories), and **Mona Lisa Overdrive**.

What inspired him to write **Neuromancer**? Says Gibson: "A contract, it was commissioned by Terry Carr as an Ace SF Special. These were all first novels. I really didn't feel at the time that I was up to doing it, but I didn't dare turn the offer down."

The future he created of urban decay coupled with high-tech wonders does not strike him as particularly bleak. "Hardly more bleak than the world we live in today, and in some ways less so," he says, "Nuclear war doesn't seem to be a major worry – wishful thinking on my part – and AIDS isn't around (**Neuromancer** actually predates our recognition of AIDS, which gives some idea of how rapidly and nastily things can change). Is it really all that different from downtown Bangkok?"

Neuromancer was first published in 1984 and inevitably comparisons have been made to the future worlds of **Blade Runner**, **Aliens**, and **RoboCop**. Has Gibson influenced them or they him?

"I was definitely influenced by **Alien's** dirty spaceship." (See the story **Hinterlands** in **Burning Chrome**). **Neuromancer's** 'look' was influenced in part by John Carpenter's **Escape From New York**, **Blade Runner** was released when I was about halfway through the book, and very nearly made me give it up. **Aliens** I didn't think had had much the same feel, though **RoboCop** certainly did, I think it's a case of various people, myself included, being influenced by the way things are," he says.

Gibson has never been a computer freak or interested in hacking. "I was more interested in hackers. **Neuromancer** was written on an ancient manual portable typewriter. I'd no experience with computers then, so I wrote from what they seemed to be, rather than what they are. In a way, I think that gave me an advantage in terms of imaginative freedom. I was vaguely disappointed, later, when I became familiar with the real thing."

Gibson did not have much input when it came to programming the game. "Brian Fargo of Interplay and I spent an afternoon at Timothy Leary's house in Los Angeles discussing different possibilities. One thing that quickly became apparent to me, then, was that I hadn't the foggiest notion of the way an interactive computer game had to be constructed, the various level of architecture involved. It was fascinating but I felt I'd best keep my nose out of it and let talented professionals go about the actual business of designing the game.

"From what I've seen so far, the game's quite true to the book – in its own way. The demands of the new form have an interesting effect on the material. When I wrote the book, the farthest thing from my mind was whether or not it was 'gameable', I imagine it presented quite a challenge to the designers."

Gibson had wanted to be a writer since the age of 13, which was the age of his enthusiasm for science fiction started. But he didn't start to write until he was in his thirties. "I'm genuinely unable to say exactly why I did start. It was very much in the spirit of 'Oh well, let's give this a try, can't hurt, just have a shot at it...' I didn't particularly expect anything to happen as a result, though I did indulge the usual fantasies – all of which, oddly enough, have come true," Gibson says.

As to the future, Gibson's work seems increasingly tied up with the cinema. "I've just completed a screenplay for **Alien III**. The sequel to **Aliens**, though at this stage there's no certainty that you may eventually see will be anything like what I've written. I'm working with John Shirley on a feature adaptation of my story **New Rose Hotel** for Edward Pressman, who produced **Wall Street**. The director is Kathryn Bigelow, whose **Near Dark**, was a big favourite of mine. I've signed to script another adaptation from **Burning Chrome** for Carolco. And I'm engaged in a collaboration with Bruce Sterling on a long novel called **The Difference Engine**, which is set in an alternate Victorian era with steam-driven computer technology."

The Interplay trio behind Neuromancer ... left to right: Troy Miles, Charles HH Weidman III and Bruce Balfour.

There are two things that are really special about the February issue of Commodore User: it's got a great new cover style *and* an unbeatable disk of Sidewinder and Silkworm taped to a flap on its front cover. This issue only will cost you £2.50, but that's great value considering you get a magazine, four full levels of Sidewinder and a cracking demo of Silkworm for your money.

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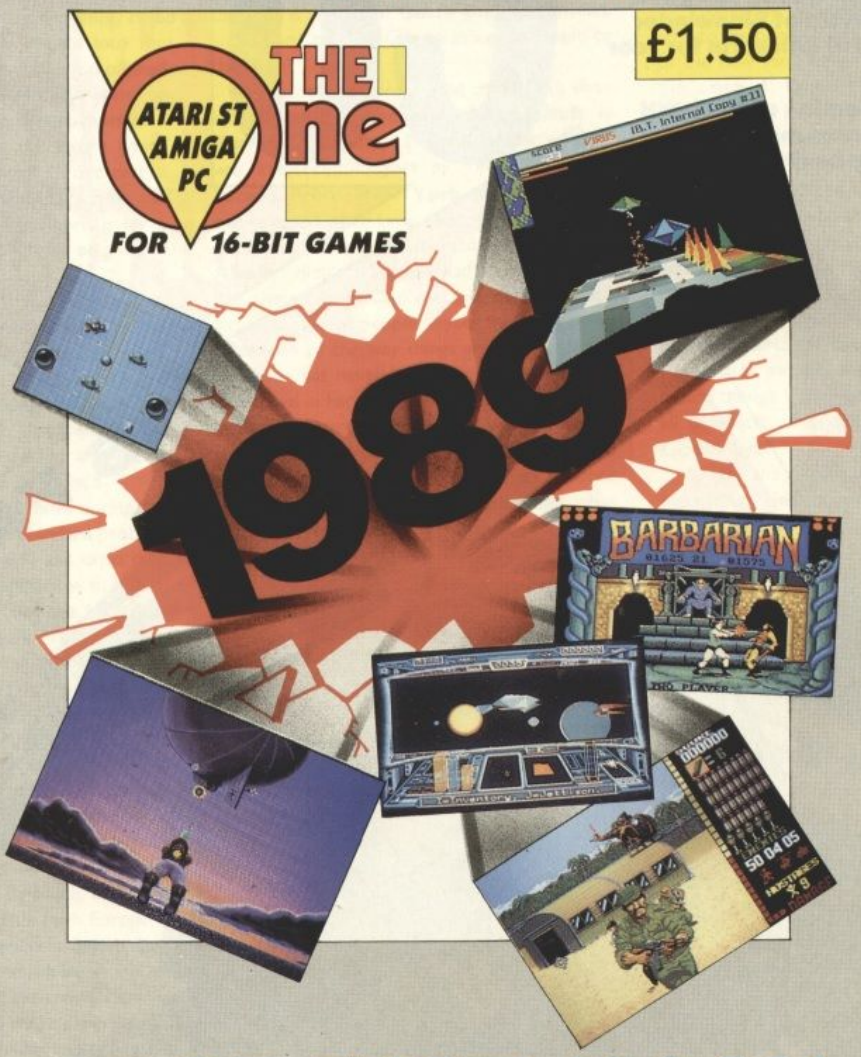

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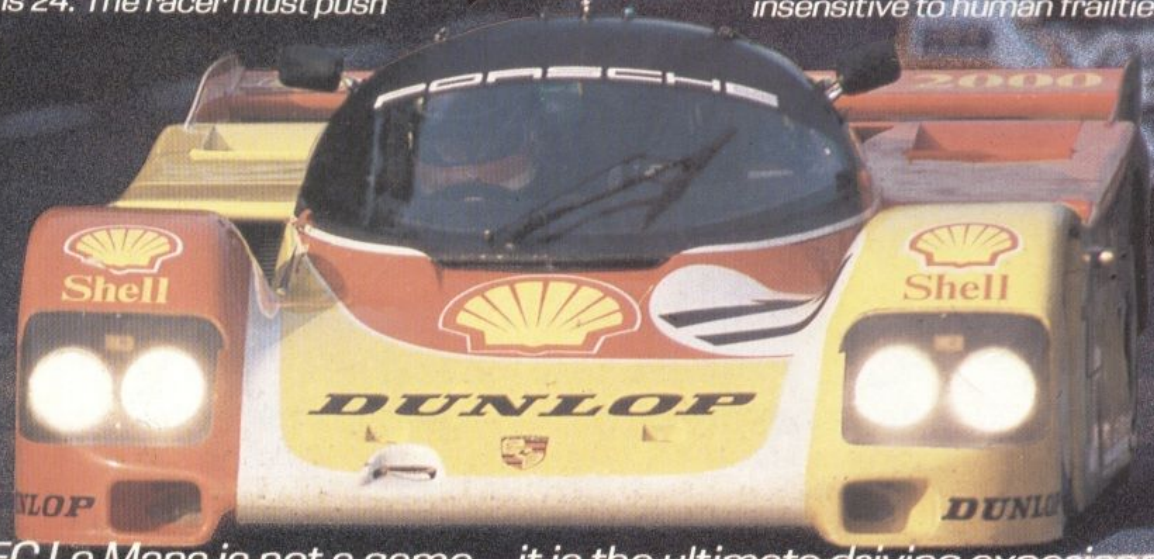

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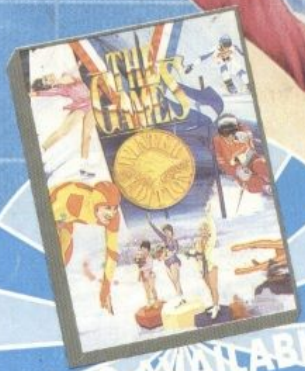

Screen shots from CBM 64/128 version.

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